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THE
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE
OF THE
Redemption of the World
BY
CHRIST

Intelligibly explained to the Capacity
of mean People.

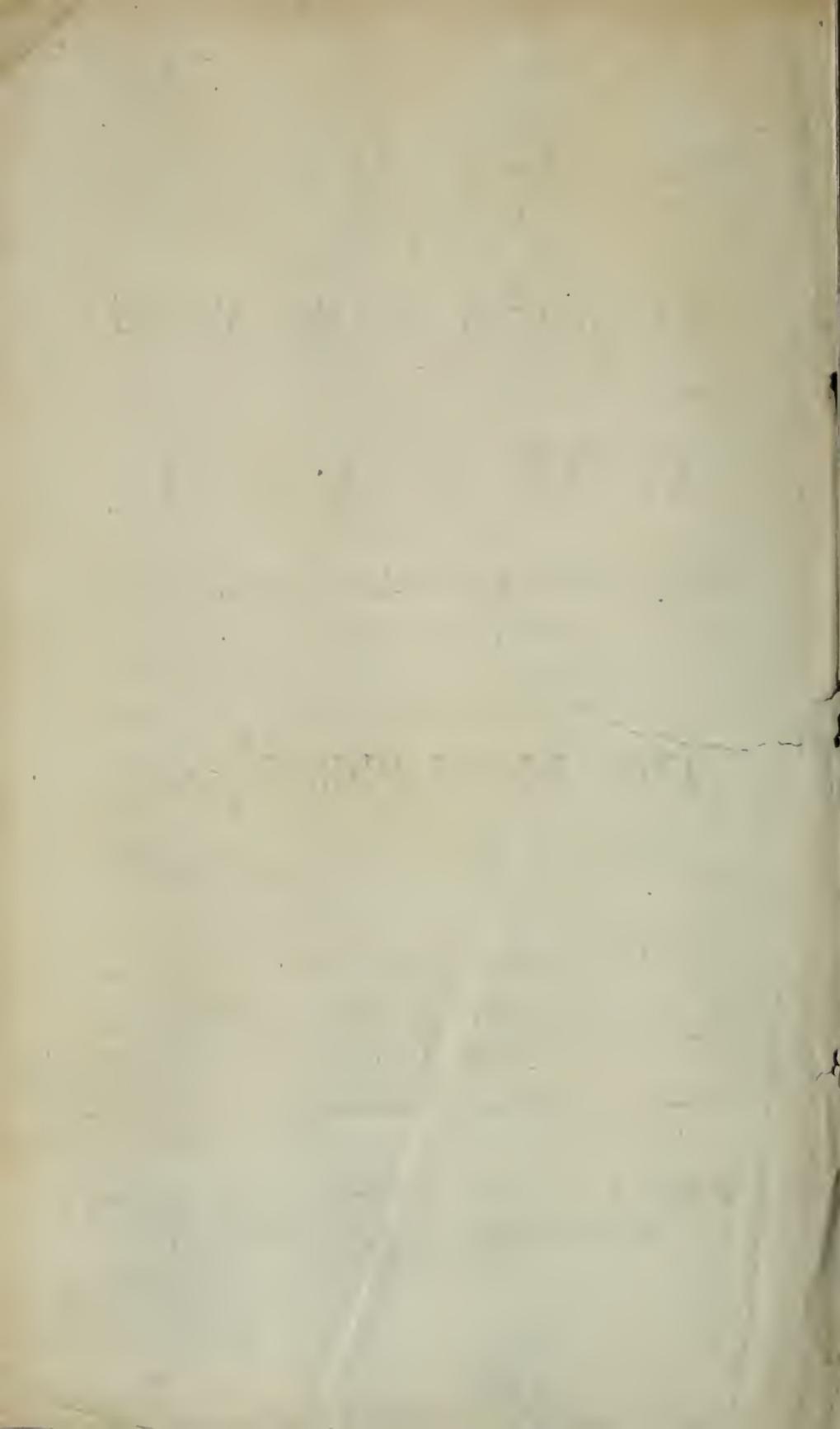
Which may serve as an Answer to a Book, entitled,

The Moral Philosopher,
So far as relates to this Subject.

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MCDDXXXVII.



To the Right Reverend

THOMAS

Lord Bishop of SARUM.

My Lord,

AS I have the Honour to live under Your Lordship's Jurisdiction, I have taken the Liberty to publish this little Treatise under Your Patronage, not doubting Your Lordship's Approbation of my Endeavours to clear a Point of so great Importance, even tho' I should happen to differ from Your Lordship in my Notions. As I am grown old, and am going off the Stage of Life apace, I am willing to spend the short Remainder of my Time in being useful, as far as I am able : And as I thought there was great Room for it on this Subject, especially considering the many bold Attacks, that have been made upon Christianity of late ; so I hope what I have here said in this Treatise may in some measure an-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

fwer my Design. I am not insensible of its Defects, but Your Lordship's Candour and good Nature will pardon them, when I inform You, that it was composed by broken Snatches and at such leisure Time as I could steal from a Life, incumber'd with disagreeable Business, and embarrass'd with Care, and Difficulties : Such as it is, I beg Your Lordship's Acceptance of it, as a Token of that Respect and Duty I owe You as my Dioceſan, and as a Testimony of my Gratitude for the Favours I have received from You; I shall be always glad of every Opportunity of declaring the Sense I have of my Obligations to You : But I have a more particular Desire to do it this Way, as it shews Your Lordship, to whom I am accountable, how I discharge my Trust in that Station God has placed me in.

I pray God to give Your Lordship long Health and Happiness, and am with all Respect and Gratitude,

My L O R D,

Your L O R D S H I P ' s m ost obliged

and obedient Servant,

T. BURNET.

THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
R E A D E R.

WHOEVER will think it worth his while to read over the following Treatise, if he desires to do it with any Advantage, the only Thing necessary for this Purpose is, that, if possible, He will lay aside all Prejudice and Partiality, in Favour of any Hypothesis he may have received; and to remember that in Matters of pure Revelation, we have no other Rule of Truth, but the Scripture.

And since I have endeavoured to draw my Notions from thence, for which Reason I call them The Scripture Doctrine; so I think it no unreasonable Request to the Reader, that he will receive, or reject what he meets with here, so far only as it agrees, or disagrees with Scripture.

The Reason I say this, is, because I am very sensible that too many are apt to form their Notions of Christianity from the Explications given of the several Doctrines of it, by Men of superior Note, and Learning; and whatever differs

from

from their Opinions is commonly censured as Heretical, or False at least, as if they were the Standard, by which all Gospel Truth must be tried:

And therefore if the Reader happens to be one of that Class, this Treatise will meet with cold Reception, as it contains many Things so different from the Sentiments of all that have gone before me, that if the Scripture be not made the only Rule of judging of it, it must be rejected with Scorn and Indignation.

But let the Reader remember, that no Man is infallible, and that the greatest Men may err: And as there are no Errors of so great Concernment to us, as those which relate to the Doctrine of Redemption; so wise and good Men should be always ready to listen to every Thing that pretends to set them right, where they are thought to be wrong, in a Matter of so great Importance, how mean soever the Hand may be that offers it.

But this is what I do not pretend to: Let Human Schemes be what they will, whether right or wrong I am not concern'd. My Business is only to shew what the Scripture teaches: And this I have done in the plainest and most unaffected Manner possible, avoiding all Dress, and Ornament, and every Thing not necessary to inform, and convince the Understanding: And as I have carried on my Reasonings in a regular connected Chain, I hope what I have said may be a Means of settling our Disputes on this Subject, or at least of reducing them into such a Method and so narrow a Compass, as will bring them to a speedy Issue.

And though I differ from others in many Things, I pretend to no new Doctrines; I differ only in my Explication of Truths we all agree in: And what I offer in this Way is intended only for the Solution of Difficulties not otherwise to be accounted for. And if Infidels are to be converted, and their Objections removed, if they are not satisfied with the usual Answers to them, it is surely very justifiable to look out for new ones.

And therefore I hope the Reader will not take Offence at what I have said relating to the præ-existent Nature of our Saviour, and the Method I have proposed to make the Doctrine of the Trinity intelligible, when 'tis only offer'd as an Expedient for the more easy Conviction of those, who cannot be convinced by other Schemes.

When the Doctrine of the Trinity is represented as absurd, contradictory and impossible, is it not proper to make any possible Supposition, that will shew how unreasonable this Objection is, and how it may be accounted for? And though this should not prove sufficient for the Purpose, yet the Attempt is laudable, and becoming a good Christian.

I mention this to obviate the Prejudices of some weak, and unthinking People, who will not bear any thing new upon this Subject: And I would not be ill thought of, without letting them know, that what I offer of that Nature is intended only for the Service of Christianity, by removing those Impediments out of the Way of Infidels, which hinder them, as they pretend, from becoming Christians: And as this I hope will be a sufficient Apology for what I advance on these Subjects; so it

*it is for the Sake of this Apology, that the Reader
is troubled with this Preface.*

*For as I publish this Treatise only to do good, as
I think it may be instrumental to the more easy
Reception of Christianity, by making it intelligible
to every Capacity; so I should be sorry to have
said any Thing to prejudice, even the weakest Minds
against it.*

*If any one shall find it disagreeable, as wrote
in a dull and heavy Way of demonstrative, and
dry Reasoning, this is what I shall make no Apolo-
gy for, as it is the only sure Way to come at
Truth; and is in no Case more necessary, than
when any new Notions are advanced, in Oppo-
sition to rooted, and inveterate Prejudices, and
Errors: I leave it with the Reader to make the
best Use of it he can, and if he finds any new
Light, or other Benefit from it, let God have the
Glory: And if he meets with any Error in what
I have said, if he please to let me know it in a
Christian Manner, I shall be obliged to Him for the
Discovery, and shall take the first Opportunity
publickly to retract it, so soon as I am made sensi-
ble of it.*

Weslington by Marshfield in
Gloucestershire, Aug. 15, 1737.

The



*The Scripture Doctrine of
the Redemption of MANKIND by
JESUS CHRIST explained.*

THERE is nothing of greater Concernment to us, as Christians, than the right Understanding of the Religion we profess : And since we profess our selves the Disciples of Christ, as our Redeemer, there is nothing which we should be more solicitous to know, than the Nature of our Redemption ; the Manner how it was brought about ; what the Benefits of this Redemption are, and how we may be intitled to them.

This Knowledge is taught us in the New Testament, where, tho' it is delivered in the plainest Manner possible, yet, I doubt, it is too often misunderstood, and by Consequence misrepresented.

To set it in a proper Light is the Design of this Dissertation : And that I may do it

with greater Certainty and Success, as the Scripture is our only Rule in this Case, I shall draw out what I have to say from thence, and that not only into as narrow a Compass as I can, but in so plain a Method, as I hope will be sufficient to instruct the Ignorant and confirm the Believer, if not convince the Infidel.

The general Doctrine delivered in Scripture is contained in these Words of St. Paul to the *Colossians*, wherein he says, That *we have Redemption thro' the Blood of Christ, even the Forgiveness of our Sins*, Col. i. 14.

And for the due Explication of this Doctrine, we will *First* consider what is to be meant by Redemption, and how far and in what Sense it is to be ascribed to *Jesus Christ*.

2dly. In what sense we are said to have Redemption thro' his Blood, and the Reason of it.

3dly. What is to be understood by the Forgiveness of our Sins, and how far the Scripture ascribes this to the Death of Christ.

As to the first of these, what we are to understand by our Redemption by Christ ; in order to a right Apprehension of this, we must first consider, what is meant by Redemption.

Re-

Redemption is taken in various Senses, but the natural and primary Signification of it is *To buy off*, and betokens some Deliverance by way of Purchase; as when we buy off a Captive from Slavery, or a condemned Person from Punishment, or the like, either by some Consideration offered, as a Motive, or by submitting to something required, as a Condition, we are then said to redeem him.

This, I say, is the literal and most ordinary Sense of the Word, and in this Sense it seems to be understood in Scripture when applied to *Jesus Christ*, and when he is represented as our Redeemer: For he is expressly said to have bought us with a Price.

The Person to whom this Price was paid according to the Scripture was God the Father: and as a Purchase does naturally imply some Covenant or Agreement made; so in our Redemption by Christ, we must suppose some Covenant, or Agreement made between God the Father and our Lord *Jesus Christ*, on what Terms, and Conditions to be performed by him, Mankind should be intitled to the Deliverance intended for them, and which God the Father would accept, as a Price paid for it.

This is easy and natural, and agreeable to Scripture: And therefore in order to explain this Doctrine of our Redemption by Christ, it is necessary to inquire,

First, What that Deliverance was that he purchased for us.

2dly, What and when this Covenant was made, and what were the Conditions required to be performed in order to that Deliverance.

As to the former of these, The Deliverance our Saviour purchased for us, it was a Deliverance from the Punishment which we had Reason to expect, and God in Justice might inflict upon us for our Transgressions.

For that Sin is a Contradiction to the Nature of God, as a Holy Being, and to his Authority, as the Governor of the World, will not be denied by any one. And that some Tokens of God's Displeasure may be justly feared by every Sinner according to the Nature and Circumstances of their Sins, and in such Manner and Measure as God in his Wisdom shall see fit for the Support of his Authority and Government, no reasonable Man can doubt.

Every wilful Sin is an act of Rebellion against God, and ought as such to be prevented or suppressed : And if Punishment is a proper Means of doing this, as it is an act of Wisdom in God to punish Sinners; so all Sinners have Reason to fear, that such Punishments will be inflicted on them for their Sins, as the Wisdom of God sees fit.

But much more when Sin is become notorious, and scandalous, where Men live as it were in open Rebellion against God, in Defiance of his Authority and Justice ; such Wickedness calls aloud for Vengeance.

Now this was the Case with Mankind before our Saviour came into the World.

All Mankind were involved in Sin, and the Bulk of them to such a high Degree, that if God had dealt with them as their Iniquities deserved, the Scripture says, they must have perished.

But such was the Love of God to the World, that He did not desire the Death of a Sinner, and therefore to prevent their Ruin, his Goodness and Wisdom contrived a Method for their Preservation, by *reconciling the World unto Himself* by Jesus Christ, whom He sent, as the Minister of this Reconciliation, to act as a Mediator between Him and Sinners, That *whoever would believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

Thus far we are clear beyond Dispute : And the Scripture is no less plain, as to the Nature of his Mediation : In which, as he was to act between God, and Sinners ; so there was something to be done in behalf of God with Sinners, as there was likewise in behalf of Sinners with God : And both were to be done by *Jesus Christ*, as a Mediator of this Reconciliation between God and them.

As for what was to be done on God's part, Reason telis us, that, if he was disposed to shew Mercy to his Rebellious Subjects, 'twas proper to make a publick Proclamation of it, with the Conditions he would require for it: There is a natural Fitness in this, that every Understanding sees: And this the Scripture says, was what our Saviour was sent for.

And as Repentance and Reformation are absolutely necessary to reconcile us to God, as Sin is a Contradiction to his Nature and Government: So our Saviour was sent to call Sinners to Repentance, with full assurance of the Favour of God, provided they would accept the Offer, as an Act of his free Grace and Mercy.

This is what no one can call into Dispute, that ever read the New Testament.

And since they could not receive this Offer, as from God, without owning him that brought it, as the Minister of God; so this was the first thing necessary to the Reconciliation of Sinners to God, that they receive *Jesus Christ*, as God's Minister, and accept the Terms offered them by him on God's behalf, as a Mediator appointed for this Purpose by God.

This is the first thing that is meant by Faith in Christ: And this general Declaration of Mercy to Sinners made by him in the Name

Name of God was the first Act of his Mediation. Thus far we have no room for doubt.

But there was something more necessary beside this to the Reconciliation of Sinners to God, even in the Judgment of human Reason.

For it is evident both from Scripture and profane History, that the World was not only sunk into the lowest Corruption of Morals, but their Understandings were darkened, and their Hearts estrang'd from God, and Goodness: They neither knew God, nor how to glorify him as God, and they were so hardened in Sin, that they wrought Wickedness with Greediness.

And therefore as there was a Necessity of a Reformation, so there was an apparent Necessity of some Provision to be made to deliver them out of this ignorant and hardened State.

And this the Scripture says, our Saviour was sent for, namely, to be a *Light to the World, to open their Eyes, and turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.*

And as it is the ordinary Method of Providence to order all things according to their Natures; so as Mankind are rational Creatures, He sent him to treat with them in a rational way, by giving them proper Means of Knowledge to inform their Understandings,

and proper Motives to influence their Wills, and incline them to act accordingly.

And as they are composed of a bodily Nature ; so God appointed him likewise to take Flesh and dwell among them, that He might speak to them in a Human Way, without that Terror and Astonishment, which the Voice of God speaking from Heaven to them would naturally occasion, as it did in the Children of *Israel* at the Delivery of the Law from *Mount Sinai*. And on this Account, as God promised the *Jews*, that He would speak to them by a Prophet of their Brethren like unto *Moses*, so he appointed *Jesus Christ* to be born of a Woman, that the World might be the more inclined to hearken to his Message, when delivered to them by a Man like themselves ; who could teach them what God required of them, as well by his Life, as by his Doctrine.

But then, as he was to speak to them as a Messenger from God, and on that Account, as there seems to be a natural Fitness, and Congruity, that He should be of a higher Dignity, and more sublime Perfections than other Men ; so God provided, that tho' he should be born of a Woman, yet it should be in such a Way, as no other Person was, so as to be properly the Son of God : And as such the fittest Person to act in the Behalf and in the Name of God.

But

- But then, as his acting in the Behalf and by the Name of God would naturally require some Testimony of his Mission, by such Works as none but God could do: And as He was to declare the perfect Will of God, which none but God could know; so there was an apparent Necessity, that in order to the End, He was sent for, He should be indued with extraordinary Gifts and Powers. And accordingly the Scripture says, *That it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fullness dwell:* Col. i. 19. And in Consequence of this, the Scripture farther says, *That the Fullness of the God-head dwelt in him bodily,* Col. ii. 9. and that *God (the Father) was in Christ Jesus reconciling the World unto himself,* 2 Cor. v. 15.

So that *Jesus Christ* was as it were the Divine Shekinah, in which *God the Father dwelt, in which he manifested Himself,* 1 Tim. iii. 16. The Medium by which God spake, and by which he acted in this Reconciliation. For what our Saviour spake (in God's Name) the Scripture says, *The Father spake by him.* Heb. i. 1. Job. xiv. 10.

- And what he did, he did by the Father, or the Father did by Him. *The Father who dwells in me,* says our Saviour expressly, *He does the Works,* John xiv. 10.

This is the general notion of the Mediation of *Jesus Christ*, considered, as acting for God with Sinners. And in this Capacity

city he is represented as a Prophet and Teacher sent from God, by whom He was pleased to reveal his Will to Mankind.

And from what has been already said of it, we see, 'tis such a Method, as, according to our own Notions, is suitable to the Nature and Dignity of God, and the Nature, Necessity and Imperfection of Mankind, and as such a most natural and effectual Means of bringing them to eternal Life.

But there is another part of his Mediatorial Office, in which He was to act for Sinners with God, in order to their Reconciliation to him: And that which he was to do on their Part, the Scripture tells us, was, to offer Sacrifice to God for their Sins, as an Expiation or Atonement for them.

And the Sacrifice he was to offer for this Purpose was his own Life.

As He was sent to take our Nature upon him, so God fore-knew, how Mankind would deal with him, what Indignities they would treat him with, and what Death they would put him to: And upon his Submission to undergo all this for our Sakes, that he might hereby reconcile us to God, God was pleased to accept of his Blood so offered up, as a Sacrifice of Propitiation for the Sins of all, that would come unto God by him, in Assurance of the Favour of God through him.

In testimony of his Acceptance of our Saviour's Sacrifice, He raised him from the Dead, and set him at his own Right Hand; where he continues with the Father, as our Advocate to make Intercession for us, by presenting his crucified Body before the Throne of God, as a continual Memorial, as it were of what he suffered, as a Propitiation for us, according to the Covenant between his Father and him.

And on this Account he is represented in Scripture as our High Priest, because as it was the Office of the High Priest under the Law of *Moses*, in publick Expiations to present the Blood of the Sacrifice offered by the People, before the Mercy Seat of the Holy Temple; so our Saviour presented his Blood or crucified Body before the Throne of God in Heaven, appealing thereby, as it were to God, for the Performance of his Mercy promised to Sinners thro' his Death, as a Propitiation for them.

These are the several Steps of our Saviour's Mediation, in order to the Reconciliation of Sinners to God:

And these he took, as the Scripture represents it, by way of Purchase, in Consequence of a prior Covenant and Agreement between the Father and him.

What

What this Covenant was, when made, and what the Conditions of it, is the next thing to be considered.

That there was a Covenant made between God the Father and our Saviour Christ, in order to the Redemption of Mankind, is to all Intents and Purposes as plain, as if it were set forth in Form.

For when one Party proposes any Advantage to another on certain Terms and Conditions to be performed ; if that other accepts the Offer, and submits to the Conditions, this is as clear a Covenant as possible.

And if God the Father appointed *Jesus Christ* to come into the World for our Salvation, on a certain Motive offered to him, and on certain Conditions required of him, which our Saviour accepted, and submitted to, is not this to all Intents and Purposes a plain Covenant, or Agreement between the Father and Him ? And does not God by this way of treating with our Saviour, as much put himself under Obligation of Justice to perform what he promises on the Condition fulfilled, as we do, when we declare our Covenants (by Bond or Indenture) with one another ? And if our Saviour has performed what was required of him by the Father, Has He not the same Right to what the Father has promised, as we have to those things, that

that we purchase with a Price, and in the same Manner?

And when we are told in Scripture, that our Saviour took the Work of our Redemption on him, not only in Obedience to his Father's Will and Commandment, *Job.* v. 30. — vi. 3, 8. — vii. 16. but also on the Consideration of a Motive offered to him, which is call'd *The Joy that was set before Him*, which implies some Joy that he had not, and could not have, but on the Condition requir'd of him; does not this necessarily imply a Covenant offered by God, and accepted by Christ, as the conditional Means of our Reconciliation with God? Nothing can be plainer I think, than this.

When this Covenant was made between God, and our Saviour, we are not particularly told: But in general it is said, that it was before the Foundation of the World, upon the eternal Fore-knowledge of God, how Mankind would act after they should be created, what Miseries they would bring themselves into, and what Remedy they would want in time to come.

This the Scripture teaches in several places,
I *Pet.* i. 18. *Eph.* i. 3, 4.

And St. Paul expressly tells us, *Tit.* i. 2, 3. That before the Foundation of the World, the promise of eternal Life was made by God to be manifested in due time by the preach-

preaching of the Gospel : And to whom should this Promise be made, but Him, who was, even then, the appointed Instrument, and Minister, by whom this Gospel was to be preached, and thro' whom Mankind were to be intitled to the Promise, even *Jesus Christ* ?

For the Scripture represents *Jesus Christ*, as having had a Being before the Creation, *That he was with God, and in Glory with him before the World was*: And since he left all this Glory to come into the World, and do the Office of a Mediator between God and Man on Earth ; and since he is said to do this in Submission to his Father's Will, and for the Joy that was set before him, (that is, as I conceive, the Joy of being the Instrument of so much Good to Mankind) *that we should not perish, but have everlasting Life* ; Does not this naturally imply a Covenant between God and our Saviour, even before the Creation, and what that Covenant was ?

And does it not likewise imply, that our Saviour having performed what was required of him, as the Condition on which God would be reconciled to Sinners, He has hereby paid the Price of our Reconciliation, and in an easy, and intelligible Sense has purchased our Redemption for us ?

And in this Sense He is truly said in Scripture to have bought us with a Price, which, tho' it was not with Silver, and Gold, or

cor-

corruptible things, yet it was with a Price of the highest Nature, and inconceivable Value, beyond all things of this lower World, namely, by his putting off the Form of God, to put on the Form of a Servant, and leaving the Glories of Heaven to live meanly and dishonourably on Earth, and at last die in Shame and Misery, as he did.

And this, I say, since he was content to do, *That we should not perish, but have everlasting Life*, we are strictly, and without Figure said to be bought, and redeemed by him.

And this, I think, is the whole of the Scripture Notion of it :

And if so, this will teach us how we are to understand the next Point to be explained, namely, That we have Redemption thro' his Blood.

But before I proceed to this, I think it proper to make some Observations on what has been said for the farther Illustration of this Doctrine of our Redemption, and the clearing it from its usual Misrepresentations.

An

*An Objection considered from God's
Fore-sight of the Sin of Man.*

IN the first Place I have shewn, that the Gospel Scheme of our Redemption was laid by God, and transacted with Christ before the World was made, upon the certain Fore-knowledge of the future Actions of Mankind, and the Miseries the World would bring themselves into. Now this is Matter of great Astonishment to us, That God should foresee all this before they were created, and yet notwithstanding this He should vouchsafe to give Being to such an ungrateful Race of Monsters, as he knew they would prove: But much more that he should contrive beforehand this wonderful Method of their Redemption by Christ, all which might have been prevented, barely by their not being created.

But this Astonishment is owing only to our Ignorance of the Reason and End of God's Operations. It is a certain Truth that God is Wise and Good, and cannot do any thing but what is best to be done. And therefore that he decreed to create and redeem the World, notwithstanding the dismal Prospect he had before him, was what he had wise and good Reasons for: And we must conceive in general, that it was better to be so than

than otherwise, tho' we poor short-sighted Creatures are not able to account for it, who know no more of his Designs, than just what relates to ourselves.

All that we are concerned in is the Fact itself, whether our Redemption was the Work of God: And if we have sufficient Assurance of this from the Authority of Christ, who was sent from God to reveal it to us, and work our Redemption for us, we have enough, and perhaps all that is possible for us to comprehend: And therefore we must not be startled at any Difficulties arising from what we do not or cannot know, to doubt of our Redemption by Christ, when we have all the Evidence of it possible that the Nature of the thing will bear. If from the Fore-knowledge of God we can doubt of the Redemption, we have the same Reason to doubt of the Creation of the World; for there is the same Objection to Both, as either, that is, we are equally ignorant of the Reason of Both.

And when we ask a Reason why God decreed our Redemption before we were made, when he knew how we would act after our Creation, this is in effect only to ask why he made us Free Agents, capable of sinning, and why he did not prevent our acting according to our Natures.

And if we do not think it reasonable to doubt of our Creation, because God has made us free, which Freedom we have, and which he fore-knew we would abuse, we have much less Reason to doubt our Redemption on this Account: For all that believe a God, believe Him to be Good, and when Sin had brought the World into Misery, there could be no greater act of Goodness, and therefore nothing more worthy of God, than to offer them proper Means of Relief.

And if this was fit for a Good God to do, it was eternally fit for Him to decree, that it should be done, whenever the Necessities of Mankind should call for it, as He from all Eternity fore-knew they would.

A mistaken Notion of the Redemption by Christ confuted.

SECONDLY from what has been said, we are taught how to regulate our Notions of the Part, which our Saviour acted in this Affair, and which I doubt is too often mistaken and misrepresented, tho' it is of great Importance to be rightly understood. For according to this Scheme of our Redemption by Christ, it appears to be quite another thing than it is usually thought to be.

According to this Scheme it is said to be the sole Contrivance of God the Father, and our Saviour is only the Instrument, by whom it was executed according to God the Father's Appointment. And tho' this is evidently the Scripture Doctrine, yet I doubt this is not the general Notioii received by Christians.

It is a common thing with Christians in speaking of this Subject to represent our Redemption, as arising from a kind of Contrast or Struggle between the Justice and Goodness of God ; Justice calling for Vengeance, and Goodness for Mercy towards Sinners. Upon which our Saviour is represented, as interposing and offering himself to God, as a Mediator for Mankind, to satisfy his Vindictive Justice, that there might be room for Mercy to take Place.

This is a common Scheme of our Redemption by Christ : But 'tis all Invention, and Romance, neither founded on Reason, nor Scripture ; for it does not appear to me from either of them, that any such Attribute, as Vindictive Justice, considered as a Desire to execute Vengeance can reasonably be ascribed to God.

Thus much is certain and allowed by all, that God is a Holy Being, that hates Iniquity ; and as He has given us Laws to walk by, so He expects that we live according to them, and whatever Means are necessary to

ingage us to do this, His Holiness, Wisdom, and Goodness incline Him to: And by Consequence so far as the Punishment of Sinners is necessary to this End, so far his Holiness, Wisdom and Goodness will always incline him to punish Sinners.

And in the Execution of Punishment, as his Holiness, Wisdom and Goodness will require that he do it righteously and impartially; so this we call Punitive, or if you please Vindictive Justice. And we conceive, that God is always immutably disposed to act thus, whenever his Holiness, Wisdom, and Goodness require him to punish Sinners.

But to imagine that there is any such Attribute in God, as thirsts, if I may so speak, after Vengeance, and delights in giving Pain and Sorrow in the way of Punishment to Sinners, without regard to Wisdom and Goodness, is what I don't find any Foundation for either in Nature, or Scripture.

The Scripture represents God under a quite different Character, as a God slow to Anger, Patient and Long-suffering, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin; that does not willingly afflict or grieve his Children, or delight in the Death of a Sinner. And whenever he punishes, it is said to be his strange Work, that is, a Work that He is averse to: And therefore when He executes Judgment,

it is only as a Means of doing Good, in the Reformation or Discouragement of Sin, and the Preservation of Government, and good Order, as necessary to some particular End of his Wise and Good Providence : And therefore I cannot but think such a Representation of God to be unworthy of Him, and highly dishonourable to Him.

And so in like Manner when our Saviour is represented as interposing, as it were, as a Mediator to reconcile the two jarring Attributes, by offering Satisfaction to the Justice of God, that He might be enabled to shew Mercy to Sinners, this is likewise so wild and whimsical a Notion, that I cannot but wonder how it could come into any one's Head that knows any thing of the Nature of God; but much more of the Scripture, where this Wise and Gracious Dispensation of Mercy, by the Mediation of Christ, is set forth to us throughout the whole Book, as owing only to the Riches of the Free Grace of God the Father.

For is it not expressly said that our Redemption by Christ is *God's Gift, and the Effect of his Love wherewith he loved us, that in Ages to come he might show the abundant Riches of his Grace in his Kindness to us through Christ*: Eph. ii. 4, &c. And is not God said to have *reconciled the World unto Himself by Jesus Christ*? 1 Cor. v. 18. And is it not said that

Christ was sent by the Father to seek and to
ſet that which was lost, and that God gave
him out of his Love to the World, that all how
believe in Him should not perish, but have
everlasting life? Joh. iii. 16.

And tho' it is true, that Jesus Christ is made
the Instrument and Mediator thro' whom
God was pleased to be reconciled to Man-
kind, and 'tis said that for his Sake God has
forgiven us, yet this is not so to be under-
stood, as if by his Interposition he had pre-
vailed with God to do what he was not ohter-
wise disposed to do: No, on the contrary, the
whole Contrivance is said to be the Effect
of his Love and Goodness only, and what our
Saviour did was only in Compliance with his
Father's Will and Appointment, as it was God's
Will and Pleasure to make His Humiliation
and Death the Condition and Price of our
Redemption: Thus we read, that the Reason
why he took that Body in which he mani-
fested himself to the World was, because God
had prepared it for him, and it was his Will,
and Commandment: *Lo, I come to do thy
Will, O God, thy Law is within my Heart,*
Psal. xl. 7, 9. Heb. x.

When He came into the World, He came
not to do his own Will, but the Father's, and
to fulfil his Father's Commandment: John v. 30.
vi. 38. — vii. 16.

When

When he submitted to dye for us, it was because he was sent to be a Propitiation for our Sins. 1 John iv. 10.

And when he shed his Blood upon the Cross, does he not call it *the Cup that his Father had given him to drink?* and does he not expressly say, that he submitted to it in Resignation to his Father's Will; *not my Will, but thine be done?*

And does not St. Paul tell us, that our Saviour's *enduring the Cross, and despising the Shame* of his Crucifixion was not, as a Motive to incline God to show Mercy to Mankind, but it was submitted to by him on the Consideration of a Motive offer'd to him by God the Father, which is called *The Joy that was set before Him.* Heb. xii. 2.

And is not our Justification by his Blood ascribed to *the free Grace of God?* Eph. i. 5, 6.

And that we have any Benefit by his Resurrection, is it not imputed expressly to the *abundant Mercy of God to us?* 1 Pet. i. 3.

And is not our Adoption into the Number of God's Children by Christ said to be owing only to God the Father, *who predestinated us to it, according to the good Pleasure of his Will, to the Praise and Glory of his Grace, wherein he has accepted us in his beloved Son?* Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.

Now from all this you see, that the whole Scheme of our Redemption by Christ was the Work and Contrivance of God the Father, without any other Motive to it but his own inherent Goodness: And that the Efficacy of what our Saviour has done towards it is owing only to his cheerful Compliance with the Will of God the Father appointing it, as the Condition of our Reconciliation with him.

I would not be thought by any one to say this in Derogation to the Honour of our Saviour in this Work: God forbid, that I or any one should admit a Thought, that tends to lessen what he has done for us.

I magnify and adore his Goodness, and can never be sufficiently grateful for his Love, that he has condescended to be the Instrument of so much Good to me, and to the World:

But I do not think it any Diminution to his Honour, not to ascribe that to Him, which the Scripture does not ascribe to Him, and which he does not assume to himself:

He declares himself to be only the Executor of his Father's Will. *John v. 30.—vi. 38.* And it was a wonderful Condescension in him, who was *with God, and in the Form of God, and in Glory with him,* to empty himself of all this; to put off this Form of God to be made Man, to leave his heavenly Glory to be made of no Reputation upon Earth, to lead a miserable Life, and at last die a shameful Death,

Death, that we might live thro' him. As this, I say, was an amazing Instance of his Love and Goodness to us, to submit so chearfully to this astonishing Humiliation for our sake; so we owe him all Love and Gratitude, all Duty and Obedience possible: And as all the several Steps of his Humiliation were appointed by God, and fulfilled by Christ, as the Price and Purchase of our Redemption, we ought thankfully to acknowledge his Goodness in his Mediation for us: And if we receive him for our Redeemer, and only Mediator, if we submit to him, as his Purchase, and hope for Pardon and Acceptance only thro' him, endeavouring to glorify him with our Bodies, and with our Spirits, which are his, this is all the Scripture requires of us; and with these Qualifications we shall not be disappointed of the Benefit of that Redemption He has wrought for us.

An Objection answered relating to the pre-existent Nature of Christ.

THIRDLY, from what has been said, we cannot but observe, That since the Redemption of Mankind was the Contrivance of God the Father, which he determined should be executed by *Jesus Christ*; and since *Jesus Christ* undertook this Work in Obedience

ence to his Father's Will, and Commandment, submitting to leave the Glory he had with the Father before the World was, to take upon him our Nature from a Promise made of our Redemption thro' his Blood shed for us, as our Mediator, and on the Consideration of a Motive offered, *viz.* a Joy that was set before him, which Joy he had not, and could not have but on the Condition required of him ; we cannot but observe, I say, That this carries an Appearance of two distinct Beings of distinct Wills and Powers, acting separately and distinctly.

For it represents *Jesus Christ* to us, as a distinct Person covenanting with the Father, and not only receiving Promises from him, but as sent by him, which seems to imply that He was a separate and distinct Being from him, that sent him : Nay farther, that He was sent not to do his own Will, but the Father's, and therefore that he had not only a Will of his own in Contradistinction to his Father's Will ; but was also in a state of Inferiority and Subjection to the Father ; and all this before he came into the World : And since He was to leave the Glory he had with the Father, to come down upon the Earth, this seems likewise to imply that he was not only a different Being from the Father, as he could be parted from him to become Incarnate ; but also that he was not a
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necessary and immutable Being, and therefore that he had a Nature inferior to God, because God cannot be capable of Change or Diminution : And since we know no Medium between God and Creature, it seems natural to conclude from these Representations, that as our Saviour had a Being before he came into the World, so he had a created Nature, in respect of which all these things must be understood to be spoken of him.

This is an Objection often made, and must appear to every impartial Reader at first Sight, and it may not be amiss to consider what Account we are able to give of this, as it is a Difficulty of very great Moment.

Now in answer to it, I think it very little to the Purpose to alledge, That the Scriptures speak of him, as God in his pre-existent State. I don't deny, that they do, and I would not be thought to doubt his Divinity even in the strictest Meaning of the Word. But yet 'tis very plain, that the Instances before given, are as full a Proof of a created Nature, as any can be given of his Divinity, and how to reconcile them is the Difficulty. The Scripture is plain in Both, and must be equally true in Both, and nothing can reconcile the Difficulty, but some Notion that will show us how He might be both God and Creature at the same time, before he came into the World.

And for this Purpose, I desire it may be observed, that as our Saviour after he appeared in the World was Man, as well as God, 'tis certain, he had a human Soul, as other Men have. And 'tis a reasonable Question, whether that Soul did not exist, before He took a Body.

It is certain, that it was an ancient Opinion long before our Saviour's Time, that all Souls pre-exist their Bodies: And no Man can deny the Possibility of it: 'Tis plain, that a Soul may be capable of existing as well before it has a Body, as after it is separated from its Body by Death.

And if it be possible, that all Souls may pre-exist their Bodies, it must be possible, and may be true for any thing we know to the contrary, That our Saviour's Soul did pre-exist his Body; that is, That he existed in his intellectual Part before He had a human Body.

And if so, since no Man denies (in our Days) that his human intellectual Part or Soul was a created Substance, it is thence certain, that if he existed in his human Soul, he had a created Nature before he took a Body. Thus far we stand upon a certain Bottom.

And if so, may it not be reasonable (as I am sure it cannot be Heresy) to conceive, That all those Expressions, which relate to Him,

Him, and betoken a separate, inferior, dependent Agent, sent from the Glory he had with the Father to become Man, and perform the Work of our Redemption, in Obedience to his Father's Commandment, are all spoken of Him, as existing in his intellectual Part, or human Soul ; and therefore as a created Being, in which Respect only 'tis possible that they can be applied to Him ? And when He is called by St. John *The Logos*, may it not be a reasonable Question, whether this must not be understood of him, in respect of his human Soul ? For 'tis certain, that the *Logos* was a Form used by the Heathens, to express the human Soul, when spoken in Contradistinction to the Body *.

And we are not without Reason to think, this might be the Meaning of the Evangelist in that place, because we are by Eusebius told, that the Reason of his writing that Gospel was, to shew, in Opposition to the *Ebionites* and *Cerinthians* of those Days, that our Saviour had a Being, before he was conceived of the Virgin, contrary to what was maintained by them.

And if when St. John tells us, that the *Logos* was made *Flesh*, Ch. i. v. 14. he means, as doubtless he does, that He was made Man, it seems to follow naturally, that the *Logos* was

* See the Appendix.

the reasonable Soul of Christ, which became Man by being united to a human Body. For a human Body is not a Man, whilst without a Soul: And if the *Logos* by taking a human Body became Man, it is not easy to conceive how this can be, unless he was the Soul of that Body.

It is no Objection to this, as I said before, That the *Logos* is called God, for this does not necessarily imply, that He was God, as *Logos*.

Our Saviour, when on Earth, tho' Man, is called God, and was God no doubt, but not as Man: He was God only in respect of the Deity, that dwelt in him, was united to him, and one with him, and acted in him, and by him.

And if so, by the same Reason, and in the same Manner, however it was, and same Sense, if we suppose the Father united to the *Logos*, and acting in, and by him, before He took Flesh, as He did after He took Flesh, the *Logos* was God in the very same Sense, that the Man *Christ Jesus* was, and for the same Reason.

And it can be no Derogation to the Divinity of Christ, to believe, that He, tho' a Creature, was called God, and was God in the same Sense, before He took Flesh, that He was afterwards.

Before he took Flesh, He was God, and *Logos*, and after He took Flesh, He was God, and

and Man. The Godhead is the same under both Distinctions.

And tho' neither the *Logos* simply as a Creature, nor the Man *Christ Jesus*, as Man, can be properly called God, in his own proper Nature; yet considered as united to the Godhead of the Father, he may in both Respects be properly called God by the Father's Godhead, which is called in the *Nicene Creed*, God of God.

All the most strictly Orthodox Divines agree, that the Father is *Fons Deitatis*, the Fountain from whence the Son and Holy Spirit derive their Divinity.

And this Notion lets us into the Manner how: Whether it will be acceptable, I cannot tell, but it seems to be consistent both with Scripture and Reason, and will not only Account for the Difficulties we are otherwise perplexed with, but also make the Doctrine of our Redemption by Christ, as likewise his Divinity, very easy and intelligible to ordinary Capacities.

This I thought proper to be considered in this place, and I leave it, as a Problem undetermined. I will only take Notice of one thing farther, which is, that if it be any Difficulty to any one to understand, how God can be said to dwell in, to be united to, and act in and by the *Logos*, or human Soul of Christ,

Christ, before he had a Body, let him consider, that we are not to understand the Manner how things are : But yet if we reflect on what the Scripture tells us, of the Angels of God, that they are as a flaming Fire, that is, that they are probably encompassed with a material Vehicle of Light, cloathed (as in the Scripture Phrase) with Light, as with a Garment : And if all Spirits be of the same Nature, it is no Improbability to suppose, that the human Soul of Christ in his pre-existent State might be cloathed with a like luminous Vehicle with the Angels : And if so, there is no Difficulty in apprehending, that God might unite himself to him in that luminous Body, as he did afterwards in his human Body : In respect of which Union, however it was, He might as well be called God, when *Logos*, as He afterwards was in the human Body : And it is easily intelligible, how it might be said, as it is by St. John, that the *Logos* was with God, and was God, at the same time, tho' not in the same respect ; and this without Art or critical Evasion.

But how plausible soever this Notion may appear, I offer it only as an Expedient to account for those Expressions, which we meet with all along throughout the whole Scripture, by which our Saviour appears to be a separate, distinct, inferior, dependent, and therefore created Being : And as this is a

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Stumbling-Block to many good Men, otherwise well disposed to Christianity, so if this can be removed in such a way, as is not inconsistent with any other Doctrine revealed in the Gospel, it is so far a Service to the Cause of Christ.

And this Notion, I say, I have here proposed as an Expedient for this Purpose, as it seems to give us an easy Account of these Expressions, and make the Doctrine of our Redemption by Christ and his Divinity intelligible.

The Trinity intelligibly explained.

AND if the same Notion be applied to the Holy Spirit, who tho' He be spoken of in Scripture under such Expressions as betoken his being very God, yet he is in other Places represented, as a distinct Being acting separately from the Father, and the Son, and not only in a State of Inferiority to both, but as doing what cannot be done by God: If this Notion, I say, be applied to him, and if he may be considered, as having two Natures, that is, a created united to the Divine Nature, and that God dwelt in him, and acted in and by him, as He did in and by *Jesus Christ*, however that was, this, I think, will give us an easy Apprehension of the

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Trinity, which has so long puzzled Mankind, and rid us of a great many Difficulties, which attend that Doctrine, as it is usually explained by Divines, and that without giving up any thing, that the Scripture has revealed concerning it: For all that the Scripture teaches is, That tho' there is but one true God the Father, who is the only true God, *John xvii. 3.* Yet the Son and Holy Spirit have the same Godhead, and are one and the same God with him : from whence it follows, as the *Nicene* Creed explains it, that they are God by the Father's Godhead: And if the Notion here proposed will make this intelligible, and at the same time account for all those Expressions, by which both the Son and Spirit are represented, as having a created Nature, and thereby necessarily separate and dependent Beings in themselves, ascribing to them at the same time every Divine Character, Attribute and Operation, that the Scripture ascribes to them, and in the strictest Scripture Sense and Meaning of them, what can be desired more? And whether it does this or not, I leave to every one's impartial Judgment.

But still I desire the Reader to remember, that I offer this only as a Notion, that I think proper to solve a Difficulty, which if it can be as conveniently solved without it, I am content it should go for nothing.

*The Merit and Satisfaction of Christ
explained.*

FOURTHLY, if what has been said be a true Account of our Redemption by Christ, this will teach us how to regulate our Notions of his Merit and Satisfaction, which are so much talk'd of by Divines, and which not only weak Christians, but even learned Men are puzzled to give a reasonable account of.

As for the former of these, His Merit; we all know, that according to the Notions of all the World, when a Person does any thing, be it what it will, as a Condition of any Benefit, or Privilege promised, He has a Right to the thing promised, so far as he has performed the Conditions required.

And therefore when *Jesus Christ* is considered, as having done what God required of him for our Redemption, He is truly said to have merited it of God, and may claim it as his Right and Due: This, I think, all Parties must agree in.

And in the same Manner, and for the same Reason our Saviour may be said to have made Satisfaction for Sinners, having done all that God required for their Pardon on his Part, and what God is pleased to accept, as a Satisfaction.

This is a Notion that every one understands, and every one must likewise agree in, and so far these Words may be of Use in the Explication of the Doctrine of our Redemption: But when Disputes are raised about them, they ought to be rejected, as vain and unprofitable, if not worse. For these Expressions are not found in Scripture, but are only the Inventions of Men; and therefore as no Doctrines of Salvation can be built upon them, so Christians ought not to be perplexed, and disturbed with them.

A Merit of Covenant or Promise is plainly taught in Scripture: And provided we believe that God is reconciled to Sinners by what Christ has done, and suffered for us, as a Price which God is pleased to accept, for their Redemption, we believe enough for our Purpose, as to the Merit of Christ, and as much as the Scripture tells us. And in this Sense we may use the Words Merit and Satisfaction safely, but farther than this I conceive we ought not to go. But I would not be here understood, as if I thought the Merit and Satisfaction of Christ, even in this Sense, did not receive a vast Addition of Value from the Dignity of his sacred Person; the Glory and Happiness he left in Heaven, and the Miseries he underwent on Earth: It was an amazing Condescension in him to put off the *Form of God*, and leave his Heavenly Glory and

and Happiness to lead a miserable Life, and die a shameful and accursed Death, as a Ransom for a sinful World, that they should not perish, but have everlasting Life: And that He should submit to all this, chearfully *enduring the Cross*, and despising the Shame, for the *Joy that was set before him*, the Joy of being the Instrument of so much Good to Mankind, as an astonishing Instance of his Love, and Goodness : But yet this is only a Circumstance. The real Merit of our Redemption does not rest on this, according to the Scripture Account of it, but on his Performance of what God the Father required to be done, and suffered by him, as the Price of it: And the Value of the Price is not material, so long as God is pleased to appoint and accept it.

For tho' God has a Right to punish Sinners, yet he may recede from that Right on whatever Terms his Wisdom sees fit : And since our Saviour has fulfilled the Terms required of him, as the Price which he was to pay for our Redemption, he has thereby purchased, and merited our Redemption for us, without regard to what he was, or what he parted with, or the Sufferings He underwent for it.

The contrary to this, I am very sensible, has been currently maintained, and taught by the general Body of Divines, upon

a Notion, I think, took easily received, and taken for granted by them; *That a Creature cannot merit*: And therefore nothing must be allowed to merit our Redemption, or make Satisfaction for us, but God.

But I humbly conceive that this Notion is altogether false and groundless.

How a Creature may merit.

FOR though it be true, that a Creature, considered as a Creature, can do nothing sufficient to merit the Pardon of Sin from God, so as to claim it as his Right and Due: Yet a Creature may merit by God's Appointment and Promise.

We ourselves can merit the Rewards that God has promised, so far as we can perform the Condition of those Promises, and in such Case the Rewards are not of *Grace*, but *Debt*. And as God has promised Pardon upon our Repentance, so if we do repent, we have a Right to our Pardon, by Virtue of that Promise, and God is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our Sins.

Nay, even the Sacrifice of the Blood of Bulls and Goats could merit Pardon, and make Atonement for such Sins, as they were appointed for: But as the Merit of such Sacrifices depended only on God's Appoint-

ment and Acceptance of them, so their Merit could go no farther, than God was pleased to appoint and accept them. 'Twas his Appointment and Acceptance of them, that gave them their Merit: And therefore as they were appointed for legal Offences only; so they were of no use towards the Pardon of any other Sins, but those which the Law of *Moses* had appointed them, as an Atonement for. And if they could atone for those Sins by God's Appointment, why not for all, if God had appointed they should do so? But God did not think fit to appoint this, but reserved it for our Saviour Christ, who, tho' he were supposed to be a mere Creature, yet if he had performed what God appointed, and required of him, as the Condition and Price of our Redemption, He has thereby merited it of God, and has a Right to it; and what he hath done is a full, perfect, and sufficient Satisfaction for us.

This I think is plain to Demonstration, and as 'tis the Scripture Notion of the Merit and Satisfaction of Christ, so it is intelligible to every Understanding: And as this Notion lays all Christians under the strongest Obligations possible to our Saviour for what he has done for us, and gives him all the Honour, that the Scripture ascribes to him, for the Share he has had in our Redemption, as our Mediator: So it does not derogate from the

Obligation we have to God the Father for his abundant Love and Goodness to us, in contriving this Method of Redemption for us, and graciously accepting what our Saviour has done, as a Means of our Reconciliation with him.

The Reason of a Mediator considered.

LAST LY, From what has been said of the Mediation of Christ, as the Method applied by God for our Redemption, we may hence take Occasion to consider the Objection that we frequently meet with in the Mouths of Infidels; *What need of a Mediator?*

But to this the Answer is easy and obvious: For that God is merciful, every one is naturally inclined to think, and by daily Experience finds. And if it be reasonable to suppose that God might be willing to shew Mercy to the wicked World, is it not reasonable to suppose, that some Terms and Conditions would be required of them, in order to their Reconciliation to Him? And if so, was it not reasonable, that these Terms required, should be made known, and proclaimed to the World? And if so, can it be a just Objection to the Gospel Dispensation, that in shewing Mercy to Sinners, God has thought fit to make Proclamation of it by a Person appointed for this Purpose, as a Minister and Media-

Mediator to transact this Affair in his Name? Do we think it reasonable that Princes should always transact their Affairs in Person, and would it be a proper Objection to the Wisdom of their Administration, that they act by the Ministry, and Mediation of others? Would it not be a high Presumption in Subjects, who are in open Rebellion against their Prince, to expect that he should come personally to treat with them, and offer Reconciliation to them? And would it not be a saucy Insolence in them to refuse a Pardon from him, because he does not bring it with his own Hands? And if it be fit for Princes to treat with their rebellious Subjects by the Ministry and Mediation of others, acting in their Name, how much more is it fit for the great and high God to act thus with Sinners? And if so, where is the Force of this Objection to the Redemption of Mankind by a Mediator sent by God to Sinners to make known the Conditions of Mercy to them?

But I suppose this Objection is chiefly intended against the Necessity of a Mediator on the part of Sinners, such as the Scripture sets forth *Jesus Christ* to be, and as such offering himself to die a Sacrifice for them, to reconcile their offended God to them. If this be the thing the Objection aims at, then, when the Question is asked, What need of a Mediator? the Meaning of it is what need of

of a Sacrifice in order to our Redemption? Could we not be pardoned without this?

And if this be the Meaning of it, I think it ought to be a sufficient Answer to it, if we should say, we cannot tell: 'Tis enough, that we know the Will of God: And 'tis impossible for us always to find out the Reasons of his Operations: And yet without knowing this, 'tis impossible for us to say with Certainty, what need there was of this Dispensation of Pardon thro' a Mediator.

But nevertheless thus much is certain, that all the World in all Ages and Nations before Christ, had a Notion of the Necessity of Sacrifices of Expiation, in order to the Pardon of Sin, however they came by it: If they had it from their own Reason, it would thence seem to be a Dictate of Nature, however cavilled at in our Days by the great Advocates for natural Reason. And if they had it not from Reason, but Revelation, is not this a sufficient Proof of the Necessity of such Sacrifices, that they are required, and commanded by God? And if God commanded and required them in ancient Times, can it be a just Objection to Christianity, that God has appointed us such a Sacrifice, as shall be sufficient for the Sins of all the World, and deliver us from all that Doubt and Uncertainty, which our Fore-fathers laboured under, as to the Nature and Efficacy of those Sacrifices they offered.

But

But how difficult soever it may be for us, to give a certain and full Account of the Reason of this Dispensation of Mercy to Sinners by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ; yet the Fitness of it to this End is not altogether above our Reason, and we have enough within our Reach to satisfy us, that it is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Men to be believed.

But as this will fall in more properly in another Place, thither I refer the Reader.

I proceed now to consider the next Point, which is; That we are redeemed thro' the Blood of Christ, and what we are to understand by it, according to the Scripture Account of it.

*In what Sense we are redeemed by
the Blood of Christ.*

BY the Blood of Christ is meant the Death of Christ: And when we are said to have Redemption thro' his Blood, I do not apprehend, that we must necessarily suppose, that our Redemption was owing barely to his Death.

For if we owe it to a Price paid for us, and if the Price paid for us was his cheerful Submission to the whole Course of Humiliation and Obedience, which was requir'd of him from his coming down from Heaven to his Death upon

upon the Cross, since it is plain, that he was sent to declare the Will of God, as a Prophet, as well as offer his Blood for us, as a Sacrifice, it seems to follow, that what he did as a Prophet was as much a Part of the Price paid for our Redemption, as what he suffered on the Cross: And he may as well be called our Redeemer in respect of what he has done by his preaching, to deliver us from the Power and Dominion of Sin, as what he suffered by his Death to deliver us from the Punishment of it.

But if this be so, how comes it to pass, that thro' the whole New Testament our Redemption is so particularly ascribed to his Blood?

Now the Reason of this I conceive to be, because his Death was the last thing required of him in order to our Redemption, whereby the Covenant between God and Him was fulfilled, and the Price of our Redemption fully paid.

And therefore when our Saviour gave up the Ghost, he said, *It is finished*, intimating to us, that by this last Act of his Obedience, called an *Obedience unto Death*, He had finished the *Work that was given him to do*, Joh. xvii. 4. Phil. ii. 8.

But the great and chief Reason might probably be, that his Death was the principal Thing required of him, as it was intended by

by God to be a Sacrifice of Propitiation for the Sins of the World. For 'tis expressly said, that he was sent for this End, that he might be a *Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 Joh. iv. 10.

And that his Death was intended for a Sacrifice of Expiation in a strict and literal Sense, is as plain as Words can express; and one would think it impossible for a reasonable Man, that believes the New Testament, to doubt of it, whilst he sees our Saviour's Death represented there under all the sacrificial Characters used both by Jews and Gentiles.

When our Saviour is said to be *an Offering for Sin* — *An Offering and a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Saviour* — And his Blood an *Atonement and Propitiation for us*; when he is called *The Lamb slain to take away the Sins of the World* — And 'tis said, that he has taken away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself; when 'tis said, that he bore our Sins in his own body on the Tree — That we are reconciled by his Death — That he has made Peace by the Blood of his Cross, which was shed for the Remission of Sins, Can there be any thing plainer than these Expressions? And must they all go for nothing, and be all interpreted away by Metaphor without any Reason for it? I cannot think a stronger Argument can be urged against the Inspiration of the Scripture,

than to say that these Phrases do not betoken a Sacrifice in a literal and proper Sense. For if they are not to be understood in their most plain, and natural Meaning, I cannot see how this Book can be said to be writ by the Spirit of Truth, when it so manifestly, and unavoidably leads us into Error, and that in a Point of the highest Consequence.

And if we are to understand the Death of Christ according to the literal Meaning of these Expressions to be a real Sacrifice of Propitiation for the Sins of the World, 'tis no Wonder, that we are more particularly said to be redeemed by that, as that was not only the last, but the principal Part of the Price paid for us, by which our Ransom was not only compleated, but upon which it did more immediately depend.

Why God was pleased to appoint this Method of our Redemption, shall be considered by and by : All that I aim at at present is, to fix the Certainty of the Point, that according to the New Testament it was so. And according to this Notion, that which we are to understand by Redemption thro' the Blood of Christ is this, namely, that his Blood was offered up to God, as a publick Sacrifice of Expiation for the Sins of the World, as a Condition required for our Redemption.

The Nature of Sacrifices of Expiation explained.

NO W for the right Understanding of this, it is necessary for us to have a true Notion of publick Sacrifices of Expiation, what the Meaning of them was, in what Manner they were offered, and how they became available to the Sinner's Pardon.

Now by Sacrifices of Expiation, we all understand the offering up the Life, or Blood of an Animal to God, which was always done as an Act of Humiliation and Repentance on the Sinner's Part, by which he acknowledged his Transgressions, and addressed himself to God for Mercy.

This was the known and universal Meaning of all such Sacrifices : And for this Purpose it was required in the Law of *Moses*, that in every such Offering made by the Sinner in Person, He should lay his Hand on the Head of the Victim, thereby declaring it to be his Sacrifice, and beseeching God to accept it, as such.

All this was done by the Sacrificers themselves : And when the Sacrifice was offered for the whole Congregation, as in the great Day of Expiation, because the laying on of their Hands upon the Head of the Animal could not
be

be done by all in Person, it was appointed to be done by the High Priest for them, as their Proxy and Representative: And after the Blood was thus offered up by the Sinners, the High Priest then presented it before God in their Name, by sprinkling it seven times with the tip of his Finger before the Mercy Seat. And by this Action, as the Priest interceded with God to accept of that Blood as a Motive of Mercy, that the Sinners might be freed from Punishment; so when this was done, they were restored to his Favour: And the Priest was authorized to bless the People, and declare, that God was reconciled to them.

This is the general Notion of publick expiatory Sacrifices according to the Law of Moses: And by this it appears, that in all such Sacrifices the Sinners had the greatest Share: They were the Sacrificers, and the Offering was made by them, as a publick Token of their Repentance. The Matter of the Sacrifice, or in other Words, the Sacrifice itself, was the Blood of the Animal slain: And the Priest was only the Mediator, by whose Hand they presented it before God; or by whom it was presented before God in their Name.

Now if we apply this to the Case in Hand, it will teach us, how to regulate our Notions
of

of the Expiation wrought by the Blood of Christ.

*The Nature and Necessity of Faith
in Christ.*

AND therefore, *First*, As in all Expiations the Sinners are the Sacrificers; so when we consider the Blood of Christ, as a Sacrifice for Sinners, it must be offered up some way or other by the Sinners themselves, either in Person, or by their Proxy, and Representative.

And since the Blood of Christ could not be offered up by every Sinner in Person, as it was, and could be shed but once; so for this Purpose our Saviour puts himself in the Sinners stead, and as a Mediator for them, and as their High Priest, he offered his Blood to God in their Name, as their Sacrifice.

2dly, As the High-Priest presented the Blood of the Sacrifice before the Mercy Seat; so our Saviour presented his crucified Body before the Throne of God in Heaven, by way of Memorial as it were of the Covenant between his Father and Him, wherein God promised to accept his Blood shed as a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of the World.

In all this our Saviour must be considered as acting on the Sinners Part, and as doing what belonged to them in their Name and

Stead, as their Mediator, Proxy and High-Priest.

The Necessity of Faith in Christ, as a Sacrifice.

BUT there is something still wanting to compleat the Expiation, which is to be done by the Sinners themselves. For as they are the Sacrificers, and what our Saviour did, was done in their Stead, as their Proxy and Representative, but without their Knowledge and Consent ; so it is necessary in the Nature of the Thing, that if they would have the Benefit of what he has done, 'tis necessary, I say, that they assent to, and accept his Mediation for them, and own what he has done as done for them, and desire that his Sacrifice may be accepted by God, as if they had laid their Hands on his Head in the offering it.

This is what is meant by Faith in his Blood, and believing in him, as our Mediator and High Priest.

And this is so necessary a Qualification for our Redemption thro' his Blood, that without this we can have no Share in it. For without this, as his Death is no Sacrifice of ours, so 'tis no Propitiation for us.

And thence it is, that the Death of Christ is said to be a Propitiation only thro' Faith in his Blood ; because, as it is by this Faith that we assent to what he has done, as our Me-

diator offering his Blood for us, as a Propitiation ; so if we refuse to own and receive him, as such, as he is no Mediator for *us*, and his Blood no Sacrifice of *ours*, so as the Scripture says, we are yet in our Sins, and the Wrath of God abideth on us.

'Tis necessary therefore in order to the Expiation of our Sins by the Sacrifice of the Blood of Christ, that every Sinner own him for his Mediator in it, hoping for Salvation only thro' Him, and the Sacrifice he has offered for them.

But this is not all that seems necessary in the Case.

For Sacrifice is a publick Act, and since the Sacrifice of Christ was intended for the Benefit of all Sinners, that would accept the Offer of his Mediation for them, thro' all future Ages to the End of the World; there seems to be a Necessity in the Nature of the Thing, of some Method to be appointed to be observed by all People to the End of the World, as a publick Declaration of their Acceptance of this Offer, and their Dependence on it for Salvation.

And since Sacrifice was likewise always understood to be an Act of the Sinner's Humiliation and Repentance, and as a publick Token of the Sense the Sinner had of the Punishment due to his Transgressions, there seems to be a Necessity in the Nature of the

Thing, that by what Act soever, and in what Method soever we interest ourselves in the Sacrifice of Christ, and declare our Faith in it, and Dependence on it, it must always be attended with, and be always done as a publick Act of our Humiliation and Repentance, if we hope for any Benefit by it.

These things are so clear that they are incapable of Dispute.

And from all this we see, that in order to our Redemption by the Blood of Christ, there is a Necessity of some publick Declaration of our Faith in it, and our Assent to what he has done in our Name. And we likewise see, that such Declaration however made, will be of no Benefit to us, unless it be attended with a just Sense of our Transgressions, and be made as an Act of our Repentance and Humiliation for them. And

Since we are said to be redeemed by Christ, as it is natural to expect that our Saviour has provided some Method for this Purpose for all that would be intitled to his Redemption; so this is the next thing to be inquired into:

And 'tis very remarkable, that our Saviour has done this by three several Institutions appointed for this Purpose to be observed by all Christians to the end of the World : And they are these :

How

How we are to shew our Faith in Christ.

FIRST, That every one who believes in Him, and accepts the Offer of his Mediation, must as a publick Testimony of it be baptised, which the Scripture calls being baptised into his Death.

2dly, That all such as believe in Him should frequently meet together to eat Bread and drink Wine in the way of a Paschal and Eucharistical Feast, in Remembrance of his Death.

3dly, That all who believe in Him should come unto God by him, in all their Addresses to Heaven, as their Mediator and Advocate with God, in full Assurance of Acceptance only thro' his Death.

By these several Acts it is, that we become intitled to the Redemption wrought for us by the Sacrifice of Christ ; and they are appointed for this Purpose, as they are publick Tokens of our Faith in Christ's Death and Mediation for us, and of our Resolution to repent and amend our Lives.

That this is the Scripture Meaning of them is plain to every sensible unprejudiced Man.

For is not Baptism a Rite appointed by our Saviour, by which we are to own ourselves his Disciples, and by Consequence receive him

for our Redeemer and only Mediator with God ? And does not this imply that we hope for Salvation only thro' Him, and his Medi-
ation for us ?

And when the Scripture tells us, that eve-
ry one who is baptised, is baptised into his
Death, *Rom.* vi. 4. &c. which Death he suffer-
ed for the Redemption of our Sins, *Mat.* xxvi.
28. Does not this imply, that Baptism was
intended as a Declaration, not only of the
Death of Christ, but that he died for the
Remission of our Sins ? And does not this
imply an Obligation to depart from those
Sins for which he died ? And does not the
Scripture teach us, that the Water of Bap-
tism was intended to be an emblematical sym-
bolical Sign of all this ? *Rom.* vi. 6.

And does not the very Form of administering
it in all Christian Churches from the Apostles
Time, demonstrate that all Christians are
supposed by this Act to enter into Covenant
with God for his Mercies only on the Con-
dition of renouncing the Devil and all his
Works, and keeping God's Holy Will and
Commandments all the Days of their Lives ?

And 2dly, The same Thing is likewise im-
plied in, and intended by the Lord's Supper ;
which was appointed to shew, that we continue
in the same Faith in Christ's Death, and
under the same Obligations, which we pro-
fessed and declared at our Baptism.

For

For as this is done in Remembrance of the Death of Christ for the Remission of our Sins, as our Mediator, into the Faith of which we were baptised ; so this naturally implies, that we own and assent to what he has done in our Name, and depend on his Mediation for us, and sue to God for Mercy thro' his Blood.

And for this Reason it is, as I conceive, that we are said by *St. Paul* to have Communion, or Fellowship, with Christ by the Lord's Supper in his Body and Blood, which plainly implies that we are Sharers with him in his Death ; because by this Action which we do in Remembrance of his Death, and as a publick Declaration of our Faith in it, we ratify and confirm what he has done in our Name : We own his Death to be our Sacrifice, and desire God to accept it as such, as if it had been offered by ourselves in Person.

And as this naturally implies an Obligation in all that do this to forsake their Sins, and dedicate themselves to the Service of God ; so all the World understand it in this Sense, and wicked Men will not join in it on this very Account.

And as for the last Institution, wherein we are required to make our Addresses to God thro' the Mediation of Christ, the Sacrifice of his Death for our Sins is in every

such Address presented before God as a Motive, thro' which alone we hope that our Prayers or Praises will be accepted by Him.

And does not this naturally imply an Obligation in every one that hopes for any Favour from God to part with his Sins, which God would not remit, but thro' our Saviour's Mediation? And when we come unto God in a Sense of this, does not this naturally suppose that we are resolved to do so, and that we hope for his Favour only on this Condition? Nothing can, I think, be plainer than this: And from hence we see how wisely these Institutions are contrived to answer the End they are appointed for, as publick Declarations of our Faith in Christ's Death, and our Obligation to lead a Holy Life.

And when we farther consider, that these two latter Institutions were intended and appointed to be repeated often, and one of them every Day we live, and in every Address we make to God; what could there be imagined more powerfully to ingage us to a Holy Life, than thus continually to present the Sacrifice of Christ, as it were before our Eyes, as the certain and only Means of Acceptance with God, provided we will make ourselves capable of it, by parting with those Sins for which our Saviour died?

And what could be better fitted to incite us to this, than the Consideration of the Love
of

of God to Sinners, in contriving this Method of shewing Mercy to them? And the Love of Christ in submitting to be a Mediator, and Sacrifice for them?

And yet these Considerations are continually presented to our Thoughts, not only in the Lord's Supper, but in every Address we make to God in the Name, and thro' the Mediation of Christ our Saviour.

Thus we see the Nature and Reason of these Institutions, and the Relation they have to our Redemption by the Sacrifice of the Blood of Christ, as they are publick Signs, and Tokens on our Part, by which we declare our Assent to what our Saviour has done in our Name, and our Consent to the Condition required of us in order to our Redemption by his Blood, which is that we repent and become a Holy People.

That the Sacrifice of Christ is necessarily to be understood in a literal Sense.

AND from hence we see, what a great Stress is here laid on the Death of Christ, considered, as a Sacrifice in a proper Sense, when the whole of the Christian Worship, considered as Christian, is intended as a Memorial of it.

For

For the whole of the Christian Worship, as Christian, consists in these three Institutions ; and as they are apparently appointed for a Memorial of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ; so this shews us of what Importance this Doctrine is in the Christian Religion, when it is so essential to it, and so woven into its very Constitution, that we cannot be Christians without it. For we can neither be baptised, by which we become Christians, nor can we do any Act of Christian Worship without it. Nay I may add, that we cannot do any Act of Christian Duty without it : For we are expressly required *whatever we do, to do it in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Col. iii. 17. By which, I conceive, must be meant, that we do it in his Name as our Mediator, in hope of Acceptance thro' his Sacrifice for us.

And hence it is, that we are told by St. Paul *Heb. xiii. 10.* that what we so do in the Name of Christ becomes a spiritual Sacrifice: Because by this the Blood of Christ is spiritually presented before God, as the Blood of the Animals used to be in sacrificial Offerings.

And therefore when we address ourselves to God in the Name of Christ, he says, that by *confessing his Name* in this manner, *we offer even*

even by our Lips spiritual Sacrifices continually.*
v. 15.

The same thing is more plainly taught us by St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 15. who says, that when we address ourselves to God, as acceptable thro' Christ, we become *a Holy Priesthood*; because, as I conceive, by our coming to God, as acceptable thro' him, as our Mediator and Sacrifice, the Blood of Christ is hereby spiritually presented before God, as a Motive of Acceptance with him: By which as we do in a spiritual Manner, what it was the Office of the Priest to do in their Sacrifices; so our Prayers, and Praises, and whatever else we do, as acceptable to God thro' Christ, may be called a spiritual Sacrifice.

From all which it appears, that when Christians are appointed to come unto God by Christ, and do every thing in his Name, it must be understood of their doing it in the

* N. B. The Words in our Translation are, *By Him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name.*

But what is here rendered, *giving Thanks* can have no such Meaning: The Words in the Greek are ὑμολογεῖμεν τὸ ὄντος, which signify properly, as it is rendered in the Margin, *confessing his Name*: And as the whole relates to what went before, where the Blood of Christ is spoken of as a Sacrifice for us; so this *Confession of his Name* must be understood of our confessing our Faith in him, as our Sacrifice, who in the foreging Verse is said to have suffered for us, and sanctified us through his Blood. ver. 12.

Confession of their Faith in Him, as their Mediator and Sacrifice.

From whence it is clear, that the Sacrifice of Christ must not be understood in a metaphorical, but proper Sense : And that it is of so great Importance to understand it in this Sense, that it is to Christianity, as the Warp to the Web, that runs thro' the whole Body of it; so that Christianity cannot subsist without it.

The Reason of our Redemption by Sacrifice considered.

BUT here the Question will be made, which I mentioned before, and referred to this Place, namely, what need is there of this? Why all this Apparatus for the doing what might as well have been done without it by the bare Will of God?

For since the Pardon of Sin, according to the Gospel Scheme, is founded on the Free Grace and Mercy of God ; and since the Efficacy of what our Saviour has done for us is owing only to the Will and Appointment of God ; and since all will be of no Effect, unless we repent and reform our Lives ; here the Infidel objects, why could not the Mercy of God have pardoned us without any Consideration at all, but our Repentance ? And what Necessity was there of a Mediator or a Sacrifice, when Repentance might have been sufficient without them ?

Bare Repentance not sufficient for Pardon.

TO this I answer, that we are not so much concerned to know what God can do, as what he will do; and if he has told us his Will, it is not fit for us to call him to an Account, to give us a Reason, why he acts in this Manner.

As for the Sufficiency of Repentance, it is doubtless the best thing a Sinner can do to restore himself to the Favour of God: But Repentance does not make the Sinner innocent, and therefore God is not obliged to accept him into Favour merely upon this Account. And we may assure ourselves, that if Repentance alone had been sufficient for the Pardon of a wicked World, God would not have required more, as his Wisdom will do nothing in vain.

Tho' God is merciful, yet he is infinitely wise, and therefore cannot be supposed to dispense his Mercy, but in such a way, as is most suitable to his Wisdom: And who can pretend to judge what is fit for his Wisdom to do but himself? And since God has thought fit to reveal his Will to us, to shew us in what way he will be reconciled to Mankind, it is our Duty to receive his Revelation reverently and humbly to acquiesce in what it teaches us, so far as we believe it to come from him, how much soever it may pose our Understandings: And it will very ill become us to refuse his

his gracious Offer, because he has not let us into the Reason of it.

But how weak soever our Understandings are, we are nevertheless able in some Measure to comprehend the Fitness of the Gospel Method of God's reconciling himself to the World by the Mediation and the Death of Christ. For how available soever we may conceive Repentance to be, in reconciling Sinners to God, considered as a Holy Being ; yet God is not barely to be considered in that Respect, but as a Law-giver and Governor of the World : And I believe no sensible Man ever thought it fit for a wise Governor to release every Criminal from the Punishment of their Sins merely upon their Repentance for them.

The great End of Punishment is to preserve the Authority of the Governor, and discourage the Breach of his Laws: And as all Societies think it proper to threaten Punishment, as a Sanction to their Laws, so they have never thought it unjust to execute it, however penitent Criminals may seem to be.

And in relation to Offences against the Laws of God, 'tis certain, that no Age or Nation ever thought Repentance sufficient of itself for Pardon ; because we know they never did depend upon it, but they had all recourse to Expiations.

Nay even in Offences against ourselves, we do not always think Repentance of itself sufficient. For

For suppose any one has done us a publick Injury, by which we suffer in our Reputation, and our Character is disgraced, it is not enough to restore such a one to our Favour, that he is really penitent for what he has done: No we always expect, and it is just and reasonable that he do us Right, and clear our Reputation, and in order to that, that some publick Satisfaction be given, some open Acknowledgment and Declaration made, how unjustly he has done by us, or else the Injury remains upon us:

This, I say, is what all the World expect, and justly expect from one another, before we forgive Offences against ourselves: How much more is this to be expected by God for Offences committed against Him? For tho' our Sins do no Injury to God, considered in his own Nature simply, yet they are highly injurious to his Government, as they bring Dishonour on his Laws, as if they were unwise and unreasonable, unfit, or impossible to be observed: And as our Wickedness may, if publickly committed, incourage others to the like Disobedience, especially if it goes unpunished; so such Sins in Reason ought not to be forgiven barely on our Repentance for them without some publick Reparation, and Satisfaction made to the Honour of God's Laws and Government, and some Method taken to prevent the ill Use, that Sinners might be tempted to make of his Mercy. And

And if this be true, as it plainly is, this will give us an easy and rational Account of the Gospel Method of Redemption by the Mediation and Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, For this I take to have been the Case between God and Sinners.

The World was universally wicked, and God had suffered the greatest Indignities from them imaginable. They had thrown off his Yoke, and lived as if they thought his Laws unreasonable, or impracticable, giving themselves up to all manner of Vices: Nay they chose to themselves new Governors, new Gods, and gave the Honour due only to one Supreme and only true God, to the meanest of his Creatures; nay even to the very Devils: And these they paid their Worship to in Drunkenness and Lust, and horrid and abominable Cruelties; sometimes suffering Men to kill one another in Honour of their Gods; and sometimes offering human Blood in Sacrifices: And that not only of Malefactors, but of innocent Virgins and Children, and those many times their own Sons and Daughters. This was more or less the Practice of all Heathen Nations.

Now I appeal to any one whether there could be a greater Insult on the Majesty of God, than thus to throw off his Government and Authority over them, and give his Throne and Glory to his Creatures, nay even to the basest Rebels. And whether there could be

a more

a more horrid Abomination thought of, than to offer human Blood in Sacrifice to them, but much more that of their own Children.

And if so, what can we imagine fit for God to do in this Case? To execute Vengeance on the World, and deal with them as their Iniquities deserved, was to destroy the whole Race of Mankind at once, as they were not only all Sinners, but all Idolaters to a Man.

But God does not desire that any should perish: And yet can we think it fit for a Wise and Holy Governor to pass by such Affronts as these from his Subjects, without some publick Token of their Humiliation and Repentance, their Submission and Recantation or Satisfaction, (call it what you will) to him?

This would rather incourage Sinners in their Wickedness, and occasion wicked Men to think, that God is not offended at their Sins, or so mindful of his Laws, as that they need to trouble themselves about them; that he either does not know what they do, or that he is above taking Notice of it.

And if some publick Repentance, Confession, Recantation, Submission must be made, as a Satisfaction, or Reparation to the Honour of God by all Sinners, how must publick Acts be done, but by some positive Institution appointed for that Purpose, either by God or Man? But who was able to judge what God would accept? This could be known only by Revelation.

Could the World have been brought into such a Sense of their Wickedness, as to resolve upon a publick Humiliation for them, as necessary to reconcile them to the Favour of God? And had they been left to agree among themselves upon a proper Method of doing this, in such a manner, as should best express their own Repentance, and make the best Satisfaction they were capable of for the Dishonour they had brought upon Him and his Laws; had the World, I say, been left to have contrived this for themselves, that which their Reason would naturally have led them to, was Sacrifice, as there was a Notion universally received (how they came by it is not material) that without shedding of Blood there was no Remission. This is plain from the universal Practice of all Ages and Nations as far as we can find by History.

But still the Question would have been, what Sacrifice to offer, that would be acceptable to God.

This was what the whole Heathen World were always at a Loss in, especially in extraordinary Cases.

And this was the Reason of those horrid Cruelties and Murthers which they were guilty of in the offering of human Blood, as likewise of that Multitude of inferior Deities they worshipped under the Notion of Mediators.

The Necessity of Revelation.

AND from hence, as we see such an apparent Necessity of a Divine Revelation, to deliver the World out of this uncomfortable state of Doubt and Uncertainty, that without it they could never have attained to any Assurance of their Reconciliation with God; so we cannot but observe the Wisdom and Goodness of the Gospel Dispensation of Mercy thro' the Blood of Christ, whereby we have not only Assurance given us, that God will be reconciled to Sinners, and a certain Method is prescribed for this Purpose, but such a one, as I shall show is naturally fitted to do Honour to God, and promote the universal Reformation of the World.

Many Reasons for our Redemption by the Sacrifice of Christ.

FOR in the First Place, whereas we have shewn, that it might be reasonably required, in order to the Pardon of a wicked World, that they should make some Reparation and Satisfaction for what they had done amiss, and the Dishonour they had done to God, by some publick Recantation and Acknowledgment of their Wickedness, what could be more proper for this Purpose, than a publick Sacrifice, which was not only agreeable to the Sentiments of all the World, but was universally practised and understood by

all, to be done, as an Act of Humiliation and Repentance, whereby the Sinner confessed his Guilt, and owned the Punishment due to him for it ?

2dly, Whereas it does appear from what I have said, that in the Pardon of the wicked World, some Method was requisite to prevent the ill Consequence of the Sinners Impunity, that Men might not be encouraged to flatter themselves, that God did not regard what they did amiss, and was not offended at it ; what more effectual Contrivance could there be for this, than the Sacrifice of the Blood of Christ ? for what could better express the Detestation and Abhorrence God has of Sin, when no less Sacrifice would be accepted, as an Atonement for it, than the Blood of his own beloved Son ?

3dly, Whereas it appears from what has been said, that no Sacrifice can avail to the Sinners Pardon, which is not in effect offered up by the Sinners themselves, which could not possibly be done to the end of the World, in respect of the Sacrifice of the Blood of Christ, as his Blood could be shed but once ; what a wise Provision is here made for this Purpose by these Institutions abovementioned ? For by them the Blood of Christ may be in effect offered up by every Sinner in such manner as to answer all the Intents and Purposes of it. For since *Jesus Christ* in laying down his Life, acted only in the Name of Sinners as a Mediator for them ; and since these Institutions

stitutions are appointed, as a publick Declaration of our Assent to his Mediation for us, ratifying and confirming what has been done in our Name, by our Compliance with these Appointments in a proper manner, we make his Act our own; so that his Sacrifice is as much our Act, as if every one of us had laid our Hands upon his Head, as a publick Declaration of it.

4thly, Whereas the end of all expiatory Sacrifices was not only to do publick Honours to God by those publick Acts of Humiliation, and Repentance, but also to reform the Lives of Sinners by keeping up in their Minds a Sense of their Sins, and the Punishment that was due to them; what could be more effectual for this End, than the Sacrifice of the Blood of Christ, continually offered up by Faith, according to the Gospel Method, in the several Institutions appointed for that Purpose?

For as by every one of these Institutions duly and seriously performed, here is a publick Confession made by Sinners of their Wickedness, and what they may justly expect for it, as we own the Death of Christ in each of them as a Sacrifice, through which alone we hope for Pardon and Acceptance; so in every one of them, we virtually renounce our Sins, and declare our Obligation to forsake them.

Lastly, Whereas the great Thing of all, by which God was more particularly dishonoured, was Idolatry, which consisted chiefly in vain and superstitious, and sometimes wick-

ed Sacrifices, and the Worship of false Objects, and false Mediators, by which God was, as it were, degraded from his Throne and Glory ; here was an effectual Provision made by the Sacrifice and Mediation of Christ for the total Abolition of all this at once.

For by the Appointment of the Sacrifice of Christ, as that which God would accept for the Sins of the World, all other Sacrifices became needless, but His. And by appointing him to be the only Mediator, thro' whom we must come unto God, and thro' whom, if we come with proper Dispositions, we shall be sure of Acceptance with God ; here can be no need of any other Mediator, but Him.

And therefore as we see this was naturally fitted to destroy all the Idolatry of the Heathen World ; so it is very remarkable in History, that all the Heathen Superstitions immediately vanished, wherever Christianity was received. These are some of the Reasons of the Gospel Dispensation of Mercy to Sinners, by the Death and Sacrifice of Christ.

There may be many other Reasons for it, that we do not understand ; but from what I have said, it appears to be a wise Contrivance, even according to our own Notions, to shew Mercy to Sinners in such a way, as was most likely to reform the World, and do Justice to the Honour of God's Laws and Government, and prevent the Abuse of the Sinners Impunity ; all which I have shewn were necessarily to be provided for in dispensing Pardon to a wicked World. And

And I think this is such a Method of doing it, as is consistent, and intelligible, and such as gives us an easy and rational Account of our Redemption.

And if what I have said be true, as it appears to be, from hence we are taught another Notion of Satisfaction made by the Death of Christ, beside that which I mentioned before.

The Satisfaction of Christ farther explained.

FOR in what I said before concerning it, I considered the Death of Christ not barely as a Sacrifice, but only as an Act of Obedience to the Will and Appointment of God, and the finishing Act, or Accomplishment of the several Things required of him by God, as a Condition without which He would not be reconciled to Sinners; and which being performed by Christ, as a Price demanded by God for it, God was so far satisfied, as not to impute their Sins unto them to their Condemnation. And this I said might be called a Satisfaction made by Christ for Sinners, as it was properly his Act alone.

But when the Blood of Christ is considered as a Sacrifice offered in the Name and Behalf of Sinners; in this Sense *Jesus Christ* is no otherwise concerned in it, than as he is their Mediator, acting for them and in their Name; and whatever Satisfaction is made by it, is intended and supposed to be made by those in whose Name it is offered: And since I

have shewn that the Sinners are the Sacrificers; the Blood of Christ is the Offering, and Christ is only the Mediator, thro' whom it is offered by them, or by whom it is offered for them in their Stead; whatever Satisfaction is made by it, is made by the Sinners themselves, and not by Christ, any otherwise than as he is their Proxy acting for them. And since it appears from what I have before said, that Sinners can have no Share in what he has done for them, unless they assent to, and accept his Mediation, it will follow, that they only can have a Share in the Satisfaction made by the Blood of Christ, who not only believe in it, as a Sacrifice, but desire it may be accepted as a Sacrifice for them. And since we have shewn how the Sinner is required to declare his Faith in this Sacrifice, it is only by this Declaration so made, that the Sinner can make the Blood of Christ a Means of Satisfaction for him.

But when the Word Satisfaction is used in this Sense, it signifies no more than Restitution for an Injury, or that Reparation we make to God for the Dishonour we have done to Him by our wicked Works.

This I take to have been the great End of the Institution of all expiatory Sacrifices, that Sinners might thereby give Glory to God as the Scripture says, by a publick Acknowledgement of their Transgressions, and a publick Recantation of them, owning what they might in Justice expect from him, and at the same time

time imploring his Mercy to them under a tacit Promise of Reformation.

And as this was the great End of the Gospel Dispensation of Mercy by the Sacrifice of Christ; so every Christian coming to God by Christ, in the way of his Institutions, appointed for this Purpose, with proper Dispositions and Resolutions of Obedience, may likewise be said by those Acts to make Satisfaction for the Dishonour they have done to God by their Transgressions ; as they do what God is pleased to require, and graciously accept, as a Satisfaction from them.

But then, as it is by the Blood of Christ alone, that we are rendered capable of this Satisfaction, and as it is thro' Him alone that what we thus do is accepted by God as a Satisfaction ; so the Satisfaction made by us may be said likewise to be His, and the Honour and Merit of it His, as He submitted to be our Mediator in it, and as God is pleased to accept it only thro' him, as a full Satisfaction for the Sins of all that will accept His Medication for them, and make his Sacrifice their own.

It is no Objection to this Notion, that the Reparation, or Satisfaction made to the Honour of God by the Sacrifice of Christ, is provided for us by God Himself.

For as God is the injured Person, it is his Part to appoint what Reparation or Satisfaction He requires, and will accept from those by whom the Injury is done. And tho' the World

World could do nothing towards it of themselves, yet it is enough if they submit to the Terms imposed.

For let us put the Case already mentioned of a Person that has disgraced our Reputation, for which we demand that he make us Satisfaction; and suppose we require a publick Recantation, which he is unable to make thro' Sickness or Confinement, or other Impediment: Now, in this Case, tho' we ourselves do all, tho' we write the Recantation for him, and guide his Hand to sign it, and afterwards publish it abroad for him, yet so long as it is done by His Consent and Approbation, the Satisfaction is made by Him, and the Work is his.

Now this is the very Case between God and Sinners: The whole World had done Dishonour to God and his Laws; and before He would shew Mercy to them, He requires that they repair the Injury, and make him Satisfaction to his Honour: They know not what God would accept for this Purpose; and as it was his Part to prescribe the Method of it; so since he has required it to be done by Sacrifice, it was necessary, that He appoint what the Sacrifice should be. And since he has appointed it to be done by the Blood of Christ, as our Mediator, acting in our Stead, it is a sufficient Satisfaction made by us, if we assent to what he has done in our Name, in such a manner as is required of us.

And

And since God has appointed us a way for this by the three Institutions already spoken of, if we observe these Institutions in a proper Manner, that is, as Declarations of our Faith in Christ's Death, as a Sacrifice for us, and as a publick Recantation and Acknowledgement of our Sinfulness ; this is received by God thro' Christ, as a full Reparation and Satisfaction from us : And by this we are intitled to Redemption thro' his Blood.

And if so, from hence we see, that, as I said before, if we refuse to own the Death of Christ as a Sacrifice, or refuse to do it in the way he has appointed ; or if we content ourselves with a bare Confession of Faith in it, without a publick Recantation and Acknowledgment of our Sins, and our Resolution to repent and amend our Lives ; as there is no Satisfaction or Reparation made by us to God on our Part ; so the Death of Christ is no Satisfaction for us on His Part : For as His Death is no Sacrifice of ours, so it is no Propitiation for us.

And as this is Matter of just Terror to wicked Christians to consider what a sad Condition they must be in whilst they cut themselves off from all Hope of Mercy from God by their Impenitence ; so it is Matter of just Caution to all, whether Christians or others, how well soever they may live, to consider what they do whilst they reject the Sacrifice of Christ, as a thing they have no Need of, or refuse to own it

it in the way appointed for it by our Saviour. For by this they leave themselves nothing to trust to whereby to procure the Mercy of God, but the Merit of their own poor and imperfect Services; which tho' they were much more perfect than the best of us can pretend to, yet they can merit nothing of God, but by Vertue of his Promises: And He has promised no Reward to any Works but such as are done in the Name and Faith of *Jesus Christ*; thro' whom we are required to come unto God, not only as a Prophet and Teacher sent by Him, but as our Mediator and Advocate with Him, who is gone to Heaven as our High-Priest to present his crucified Body before the Throne of God, and ever lives to make Intercession for us.

And as there is no other Name given unto Men, whereby they can hope for Pardon and Salvation, but the Name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the one only Mediator between God and Man, He is the only Foundation whereon we can build with Safety: And if we will vainly trust to our own weak Reason, by professing ourselves Wise, we shall become Fools.

Thus have I finished what I thought necessary to explain the Scripture Notion of our Redemption by the Blood of Christ, with such probable Reasons for it, as we are able to comprehend; as also what Conditions are required of all that would be entitled to it: All which, as it is drawn from the Scripture taken

taken in its natural and most obvious Meaning, so it sets before us such a View of this wonderful Dispensation, as is, I am sure, consistent, and, I hope, intelligible.

*The Benefit of Redemption in the Forgiveness
of our Sins considered.*

I Proceed now to consider in the last Place the Advantage we have by the Redemption of Christ, which is expressed by the *Forgiveness of our Sins*, and what the Scripture teaches us concerning it.

To be assured that God will pardon Sin, and what Terms he requires for this End, is what every one, who believes in a Holy and Righteous God, must above all Things desire and rejoice in, as the greatest Comfort of his Life.

And yet this is a Privilege that God has vouchsafed to offer through the Mediation of Christ, to all that will accept it at his Hands, on the Conditions he requires of them.

What the Conditions required for this Purpose are, we have already seen.

As God has made *Jesus Christ* the Minister of this Reconciliation offered to Mankind, He requires that they receive Him as such: And as God is pleased to accept His Death as a Sacrifice of Atonement for their Sins, provided they assent to what he has suffered for them, so he expects that they declare this in a proper Manner, that is, in the due Observation

vation of those Institutions he has appointed for this Purpose.

And if in the Observation of these Institutions we come to God with a penitent and obedient Heart, we are sure of our Restoration to His Mercy and Favour, so that our Sins shall be as it were blotted out of the Book of God's Remembrance, and shall not rise up to our Condemnation.

These are the Gospel Terms of Forgiveness, and upon these Terms we are sure, that there is no Sin so great, but shall be forgiven.

And what those Privileges are, which our Saviour has procured for all that are intitled to this Forgiveness, I think it now proper to explain to you, as they are represented to us in the Scripture.

Now the first Privilege we are admitted to by the Forgiveness of our Sins, is, that we are released from Punishment. Various are the Ways in which God may punish Sinners, according as his Wisdom sees most suitable to the Ends of his Providence.

But the first Punishment threatened to Sinners was Death; and as our first Parents were the first Sinners, they first brought Death into the World: The Wages of their Sin were Death; it was threatened to them to prevent their Sin, and was executed on them as a Punishment after they had sinned, which naturally implies, that they would not have died without it.

But tho' they were the first Sinners, and the first to whom Death was due, as a Punishment, yet they were not the first that died ; but Death is not to be considered as a Punishment to any but them, unless it be inflicted by the Hand of God on Sinners for their personal Transgressions, as in many Cases probably it may be, and the Scripture mentions some.

But in the common Course of Things, Death is a natural and necessary Effect of a natural and necessary Cause. For all Mankind are born with a mortal Nature : Death is a necessary Attendant on their very Constitution, and it is as natural to them to die, as it is to be born of their Parents with such a Body, as will in its own Nature decay and fall to Dust.

And therefore Death in the Posterity of *Adam* cannot be considered as a Punishment, but only as an Affliction, or Misfortune derived from him as the Effect of a bodily Distemper, and a bad Constitution which he contracted by his Sin, and conveyed to them in a natural way ; and with this mortal and corruptible Constitution, were his Descendants as pure as Angels, it would be impossible for them to avoid Death, unless preserved by Miracle.

And therefore when we are said to have Forgiveness of our Sins by the Death of Christ, and by consequence that we shall be released from the Punishment of them, it will not
hence

hence follow that we must be released from dying, or that our bodily Constitution must by a Miracle be so changed, as that we should not be liable to Death. Natural Causes will produce their natural Effects, and we shall and must all die, we know, notwithstanding what Christ has done and suffered for us.

And therefore that which our Saviour has done for us in this Respect is, that after Death we shall be restored to Life again ; so that Death which is necessarily consequent upon our very Constitution, and under which we must have lain for ever, had not God contrived this Method of Deliverance for us, shall not have Dominion over us. But as in, or by, or thro' *Adam* all die, so in, and by, or thro' Christ, all shall be made alive.

But this would be no great Privilege if this were all : For barely to be restored to Life again would be no Advantage, if we were to live again in the same State of Vanity and Vexation, Fears and Cares, Pains and Sickneses, and at last be liable to Death as we were before. This is what a wise Man would not choose, how loth soever he were to die.

And therefore to be delivered from Death must be more than this : It must imply a Deliverance from this mortal State with all its miserable Attendants and Consequences, which Sin brought into the World. And therefore, as we are to be restored to our Bodies again by a Resurrection from the Dead, so the Scrip-

ture tells us, they shall be such Bodies, as shall be free from all those Infirmities, and Inconveniences that cleave to us here ; they shall be Spiritual, Powerful, Glorious, Incorruptible and Immortal Bodies ; and this is a very agreeable State no doubt ; but this is not the only Privilege we shall have by Christ : There are worse Consequences of Sin than those we suffer in this World : There is a State which the Scripture calls the second Death, and represents under all the most dismal Circumstances of Horror. And as this is set forth, as the Punishment of Sinners, though prepared at first for the Devil and his Angels, so by the Forgiveness of our Sins, it is implied, that we shall be delivered from this second Death. This Punishment is represented by the Similitude of a Lake of Fire, and Brimstone, a never-dying Worm, and an everlasting Thirst, I say, by the Similitude : For if this be the Portion prepared for the Devil, and his Angels, as they are Spirits, and therefore may reasonably be supposed not to have Bodies, or such Bodies, at least, as are capable of being affected by Fire, and Brimstone, and much less of Thirst after Water, so these Expressions can be only rhetorical Representations to shew the Severity of that Punishment, by Torments the most terrible to Human Nature, and therefore above all Things to be avoided :

This is that Death, which is particularly said to be the *Wages of Sin*, and the Portion of Sinners in another State.

But this our Saviour has delivered all Sinners from, who will accept the Offer of Redemption by Him, and has purchased everlasting Life, and Happiness for them, if they will make themselves capable of it by submitting to the Terms required for it :

It is to him that we owe the Assurance of this Happiness: For it is not only said to be the Gift of God through Christ, *Rom.* vi. 23. But we are likewise said to be quickened and raised up together with Him in his Resurrection. And to sit together in heavenly Places by Virtue of His Ascension. *Eph.* ii. 6. He went to Heaven, it is said, to prepare a Place for his Disciples, that where he is, there they may be also, *Job.* xiv. 2, 3. And as He has taken Possession of it in their Name; so the Scripture tells us, that at the last Day He will actually confer that Happiness upon them, which he has prepared for them, and promised to them; we are in Heaven already in Him, and hereafter we shall have Possession of it given us by Him: In Him already as our Proxy, and by Him hereafter, as our Judge.

This is a vast Privilege we enjoy by our Saviour's Means, to be assured of this everlasting and happy State: We all naturally desire Happiness; we seek for it in various Methods, but we are sure, we cannot find it here: 'Tis therefore a great Comfort and Satisfaction to us, to know, that there is a Place provided for us, and assured to us hereafter, where we may be eternally happy, if we will.

But

But these Privileges how great soever are not the only ones we have by His Means : There are other Advantages we are intitled to by Him, even in this World.

For God has not only promised Forgiveness of Sins and eternal Happiness to those, who believe in Christ, but he has likewise promised to take them for his Children even here, that he will be to them a Father, and they shall be to Him as Sons and Daughters. And in Vertue of that Relation, he promises them a Liberty of Access to Him, as their Father, with Assurance of being heard in every Thing they ask, provided they do not ask amiss, *Rom. v. 2. Eph. ii. 18. Heb. x. 22, 23. 1 Ep. Job. iii. 21, 22.*

And as in order to our future Happiness, he knew we should meet with great Difficulties, and Temptations which might obstruct, and discourage us in our Christian Course, so he has promised us such Aid as is sufficient for us, in the Assistance of his Holy Spirit ; by the Help of which we shall be inabled to do all Things that are required of us.

These are such Privileges as we have in Hand, and these the Scripture says, we owe to our Saviour's Mediation : For it is through Him that we are said to receive the Adoption of Sons, *Gal. iv. 5. Eph. i. 5.* And through Faith in Him, that we are the Children of God, *Gal. iii. 26.* And in or by him that we have Boldness, and Access with Confidence unto God. *Eph. iii. 12.*

And through Him that we must hope to be heard of God in Prayer when we ask in His Name and in Faith of his being sent by God.
Job. xv. 16. Job. xvi. 23, 27.

And whatever Assistance is promised from the Spirit, the Scripture tells us, that it is owing only to our Saviour's Ascension, and the Power of his Intercession for us. *Job. xiv. 16. xvi. 7.*

These are the glorious Privileges all true Christians are intitled to, by Virtue of our Redemption by Christ, all which are consequent on the Forgiveness of our Sins, and our Restoration to the Favour of God.

The Benefits of our Redemption conveyed to us by the Sacraments.

BUT then, as all these Privileges are offered to us by God only through the Mediation of Christ for us, provided we will accept the Offer through Him, ratifying in our own Person, what He has done in our Name, and dedicating ourselves to His Service in an humble Sense of our Transgressions ; so since He has appointed several Institutions for this End, it is only in a proper Use of those Institutions that we can be intitled to these Privileges.

And thence it is, that we are said in Scripture to be *justified*, and *regenerate*, and to receive the *Spirit of God*, and to become *Heirs of Eternal Life by Baptism* :

Because the Pardon of our Sins, which is the Meaning of Justification, is made over to us by Baptism, as it is appointed by our Saviour, as an outward Sign, by which we accept the Offer of Salvation made by Him, and ingage ourselves to perform the Conditions of it.

And for the same Reason we are said to be Regenerated by it, as we hereby contract a new Relation to God, as he hereby adopts us for his Children, and receives us into his Family, and Household, as our Father.

And we are hereby likewise said to receive the Spirit of God, as we are by this Act intitled to the Promise of His Assistance, and are put under his immediate Conduct, and Direction. In the first Ages of Christianity, we read of extraordinary and miraculous Gifts conveyed to Christians upon their Baptism : But we know of no such Gifts in our Days : 'Tis enough that we are assured of all proper Assistance from Him, and this Assurance we have by Baptism.

And lastly we are said to be made Heirs of Salvation by Baptism, in Consequence of our being the adopted Children of God, to whom He has promised to give Eternal Life through Christ, provided we will make ourselves meet to be Partakers of it by Repentance, and a holy Life.

The same Things may be said of the Lord's Supper, as it is a Profession of the same Faith and Holiness, which we make at our Baptism, and as it was instituted for the same End :

For, as Baptism was appointed for the publick Profession of our Faith in Christ, and of

our Acceptance of the Conditions required by Him in order to our Salvation : So the Lord's Supper was to shew, and declare our Continuance in this Profession : And as by every such Act, we must be supposed to renew the Declaration, and repeat the Vows we made at our Baptism ; so by Consequence we renew and revive our Title to Pardon, and Adoption, the Assistance of the Divine Spirit, and Eternal Life : And we may assure ourselves, that if we are but faithful to the Profession we make, and the Vows we ingage ourselves in by these Institutions, we may assure ourselves, I say, that these several Privileges are by every such Action new sealed and confirmed to us, till we forfeit them by acting contrary to what we by them professed and vowed to do.

And if this be true, as it appears to be, as this shews us the Necessity of observing these Institutions, if we desire the Benefits of our Saviour's Redemption, so from hence likewise we may be able to determine that famous Question so much disputed among Divines, whether the Sacraments confer Grace, and how.

How the Sacraments confer Grace.

FOR since it appears from what has been said, that by these Institutions, duly, and rightly observed, according to the Intention of them, we are intitled to all the Mercies purchased for us, by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, they are by Consequence the instrumental Means of conveying what we call the *Grace*

of God to us. For by *Grace* is meant *Favour*, and by the *Grace of God* the *Favour of God*. And whatever will intitle us to the *Favour of God* may be properly said to confer the *Grace of God* upon us.

Now there can be no higher Instances of the divine Favour shewn to Mankind, than those Mercies and Privileges, which our Saviour has procured for us, and promised to us in the Gospel: And since the necessary Qualifications for these Mercies and Privileges are Faith and Repentance; and since the Sacraments are required, as outward Signs, by which we are to declare our Faith and Repentance, that thereby we may be intitled to these Mercies and Privileges; from hence it will follow, that the Sacraments observed for this End and Purpose, are the Gospel Means of conferring the Grace of God upon us: For if by these Instruments and Signs the Gospel Mercies become ours, they are by Consequence the Channels through which they are conveyed to us: And that not by Way of magical Charm, or mechanical Operation, as some are pleased to represent it, but in the same Manner and Sense, as Estates and other temporal Privileges are conveyed to us by signing and sealing of Deeds, and Indentures, as publick Tokens of our Assent and Consent to the Covenants therein contained: And as we all know, that by signing, and sealing such Deed, or Indenture, we have an immediate Right to the Benefits, and Advantages contained in it upon the Conditions.

therein required of us ; so it is obvious, and intelligible to every Understanding, How we may have the same Right to all the Gospel Mercies conveyed to us in the Use of the Christian Sacraments, when observed, as publick Declarations and Tokens of our Assent to what our Saviour has done for us, and our Consent to the Conditions required of us by Him.

This is an easy and intelligible Account of the Manner how the Sacraments confer Grace, as it is agreeable to the customary Way of conveying Rights and Privileges in Human Society.

The Necessity of the Christian Sacraments and the Danger of refusing to comply with them.

AND as this shews us the Benefit of these Institutions, and our Obligation not only to observe them, but to do it in a proper Manner, so it likewise shews us the Danger of refusing our Compliance with them.

For, as in Human Society, He who will not comply with the publick Forms appointed for the Conveyance of temporal Privileges, can have no legal Right to them : So neither can he, who refuses to comply with the Gospel Institutions for the Conveyance of the Gospel Mercies to us, have any Gospel claim of Right to those Mercies.

How God may deal with such Persons whose Refusal to observe his Ordinances is not owing to the Obliquity of their Will, but their Ignorance, and therefore may be rather their Mis-

fortune, than their Fault, I will not say : But as for those, who know the Will of God, but will not do it ; who, though they enjoy the Gospel Revelation, yet will not accept the Offer of Salvation in the Gospel Way, what other Title they can have to it, I do not see.

Such a wilful Opposition to the revealed Will of God does not betoken such a teachable and humble Spirit, as God delights in and has promised his Grace, and Favour to. *Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.* And if Men will not be saved in God's Way, I fear they will be disappointed in their own.

But here the Infidel objects, that it is very unreasonable to make the Mercies and Favours of God to depend on mere Forms and Ceremonies as the Sacraments are, which have no natural Goodness in them : They think it arbitrary and tyrannical to impose such Things, which having no rational Connexion with the Ends they are appointed for, must be the Effects of mere Will without Reason, and therefore unworthy of a Wise, and Good God.

An Objection against the Sacraments answered.

THIS is a common Objection, and a very weak one. For the Mercies and Favours of God are not made to depend on the Sacraments, as bare Forms and Ceremonies, but on the Things signified by them : For these Forms and Ceremonies are instituted, only as Signs to express what is necessary to be done, but can-
not

not in the Nature of Things be done without them, or something equipollent to them.

The Necessity of something of this Nature we have already shewn.

For since God has been pleased to offer Reconciliation to the World in the way of publick Expiation through the Mediation and Sacrifice of Christ, we have already shewn, that there is a Necessity in the Nature of the Thing of some outward publick Means to be appointed, whereby to declare, that we accept the Offer, and assent to his Mediation, and Sacrifice for us.

And since I have likewise before shewn, that in granting Pardon to the wicked World, it was reasonable, that God should require some publick Confession, and Recantation to be made by Sinners, to shew the Sense they have of His Justice, and the Dishonour they have done him by their wicked Works, there was likewise a Necessity in this Respect of some outward Means to be appointed for this Purpose: For how can any Man conceive it possible for any such publick Action to be done by all the World, without some publick Form, or Ceremony appointed for it?

And since it further appears from what I have before said, that it is reasonable to expect that God Himself should appoint in what Manner, He requires this Publick Confession, or Recantation shall be made, where he has appointed the Sacraments for this Purpose, is it a reasonable Objection that there is no natural Goodness

Goodness in them, antecedent to that Appointment? Can we expect any other Goodness in Signs, than that of Signs? And if it be fit for God to require such Signs; whatever the Matter of them be, there is a natural Goodness in observing them when commanded: Natural Reason teaches us to obey, when God commands, and every Act of Obedience to God's Will, however made known to us, is, as such, an Act of Religion: And therefore when God commands the Observation of the Christian Sacraments, as outward Signs of those inward Dispositions, which he requires, as necessary to his Favour and Mercy, though they have no natural Goodness in themselves, yet we are under a natural Obligation to observe them in Obedience to the Will of God: And when they are observed, as God intended, with those inward Dispositions, which they are appointed to express, they are religious Actions, highly acceptable to God.

And it argues a great Weakness to censure such Institutions of want of Wisdom, because they have no necessary Connexion with the End they are appointed for.

All outward Signs are arbitrary Things, and depend intirely on the Will of those who appoint them and agree to the Use of them: The Design of them is only to express our inward Thoughts and Sentiments. And there is no more Necessity, that all such Signs should have a natural Relation to, or Connexion with the Things they are used for, than that all Words and

and Names, which are Signs instituted for the same End, should have a necessary Connexion with the Things, that are expressed by them.

This we know they have not, and there is no Necessity they should : 'Tis enough that People understand one another by such Signs, whether they be Words or Actions, and 'tis not material what the Signs, Words and Actions are so long as they are but understood.

Without such publick Signs, by which Mankind express their Sentiments to one another, no publick Affairs of Society can be transacted : And whatever Forms and Ceremonies are appointed for this Purpose, 'tis sufficient, that they are appointed : And it signifies nothing what they are in their own Natures.

Among ourselves, and all other Societies at this Day, we know that Affairs of the greatest Importance are carried on, and Rights of the highest Nature are acquired and transferred by that known Ceremony of writing our Names, and setting our Seals: When 'tis plain, that there can be no natural Relation, or Connexion between my Name, and Seal, and another Man's having my Estate, or any thing else belonging to me, but that it is an appointed Sign, by which I declare my Agreement to the Contract contained in the Writing, to which my Hand and Seal is put : And did ever any Man of Sense condemn the Wisdom either of the Institution itself, or those, that appointed it ?

And if not, is it reasonable, when God has thought fit to offer many great and valuable

Pri-

Privileges to Mankind on certain Conditions required of them, and has appointed the Sacraments, as the outward Signs by which we are to declare our Acceptance of the Offer, and our Assent to the Terms, is it reasonable, I say, to arraign his Wisdom and Goodness in this Dispensation, because there is no natural Connexion between these Sacraments, and the Privileges conveyed by them ?

If it be fit and necessary that some instituted Rites and Ceremonies should be observed in confirming Covenants and conveying Rights and Privileges in civil Society, why is it not reasonable and fit for God to appoint such Rites and Ceremonies for the conveying Rights and Privileges in a Christian and Religious Society? And why must such Ceremonies be of less Obligation, when appointed by God, than they are, when appointed by Men ?

It is very hard, that we will not allow God the same Right in dispensing his Favours, as we must and do to every Society, nay to every one in the World; that is, To bestow them in what Manner and on what Terms they please.

And yet when God makes us the Offer of the greatest Favours and Privileges, that Mankind are capable of receiving from Him, because He has appointed the Sacraments to be the Instrumental Means of conveying them to us, as Signs, by which He requires us to declare our Acceptance of the Offer, on the Terms they are promised to us, this is condemned as arbitrary and tyrannical in Him, unworthy of a Wise and Good Being.

This

This is very strange in Men that pretend to set up for Masters of Reason. But it is still more strange to find such Objections in the Mouths of People pretending to be Advocates for moral Righteousness : For if they had any true and sincere Regard to moral Righteousness they would gladly comply with every Method that might be instrumental to it :

And yet from what has been said, they cannot but see how wisely the Christian Institutions are contrived for this Purpose, as they naturally tend to preserve in our Minds a lively Sense of the Love of God to Mankind, as likewise of His Holiness, and Justice, of His Hatred of Sin and Love of Righteousness, and our Obligation to depart from all Iniquity, if we would be intitled to His Favour and Mercy :

No one can deny, but a Sense of these Things duly imprinted on our Hearts is naturally productive of a good Life.

And is it not therefore strange to see the Christian Institutions so violently opposed under the Notion of Zeal for moral Righteousness, which are of so apparent Use to that Purpose, and which would not probably have been enjoined, but for their natural Fitness and Congruity, to promote that undeniably necessary End ; as they set before us continually, when rightly observed, the strongest Motives possible to ingage us to a Holy Life.

Thus

Thus we see what is meant by the For-giveness of our Sins, and how Christians are intitled to it.

And from the whole of what has been said considered together, I think we have a clear and full View of the Scheme of our Redemption by the Blood of Christ, as it is set forth to us in the New Testament, understood in its plain and natural Meaning, without artful Glosses, and Metaphysical Subtleties: And as this was the whole of my Design in this Discourse, I would here conclude, but that there are one or two things yet behind, which I think necessary to be taken Notice of, as they may be of use to the farther clearing of this Subject. And they are these:

Questions to be answered.

IN the first Place we may observe, that since it appears from what has been said, that we can have no Share in what our Saviour has done without Faith in Him, and that not only as a Prophet, but a Sacrifice; this may give us Occasion to inquire into the Question, much disputed by Divines, how far the Redemption of Christ extends, and how it can be said to be universal.

2dly, Since it does appear from what has been said, that all who are redeemed by Christ, have Forgiveness of their Sins: Here a Question naturally offers itself, how it comes to pass, that they, who are guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, have no Share in this Re-

Redemption, and why their Sin shall never be forgiven ?

Both these are Questions very material, and such as every one that considers this Subject, will naturally expect an Answer to; and from what has been said in the foregoing Treatise, they will find an easy Resolution of them.

Universal Redemption considered.

AS to the *First* of them, The extent of the Redemption wrought by Christ, the Scripture represents it as universal ; *Jesus Christ* is said to be the *Saviour of all*, to *seek and save that which was lost*, and to have *died for all*, for *every Man*, for *the whole World*.

But he did not intend to save them whether they would or not : He was to offer Salvation to all that would accept it, of all Nations and Languages without respect of Persons : And as He sent out his Apostles, and indued them with proper Gifts and Powers for this Purpose ; so all that accept the Offer of it on the Terms of the Gospel Covenant, are thereby assured of their Redemption by Christ.

As Mankind are Free Agents, they must be dealt with, as such, and when the Gospel Revelation is made known to them, and proper Motives given to bring them to the Belief of it, they must be left to themselves, whether they will receive it, or not. And tho' few happen eventually to be saved by it, it is their own Fault ; their Destruction is of themselves. The Re-

Redemption may nevertheless be said to be universal, which is intended for and offered to all that will accept it, and submit to the Terms and Conditions of it.

But the chief Difficulty of the Question consists in this, Whether the Redemption of Christ is of any Benefit to those who never heard of it: For since our Saviour is represented as a Propitiation only for those that believe in Him; and since no one can believe in what he knows nothing of, from hence it follows, that they only are capable of any Benefit by the Redemption of Christ, to whom the Gospel is made known. And this, I think, to be very true, if the Redemption of Christ be considered, as owing to his Death, as a Sacrifice of Propitiation only.

For since every such Sacrifice is an Offering made by Sinners, as an Act of Humiliation for their Sins, if the Death of Christ be a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of all the World, all the World must some way or other join in in it, so as to make it their Offering; and how can they do this who know nothing of it, or do not know what it was intended for?

For this Reason I make no Doubt, but that since this Method of Redemption by the Blood of Christ was determined and appointed by God, before the Foundation of the World, it was revealed to our First Parents, as a Comfort to them in the sad Condition they had brought themselves and their Posterity into by Sin.

And that Sacrifices were appointed, not only for a continual Remembrance of the promised Mercy by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, but also as a Memorial of it before God, by which they declared their Faith in it and Dependence on it, thro' all Ages till his coming, as our Sacraments are appointed for the same End, since his coming to be continued thro' all Ages to the End of the World.

And for this Reason it may be, that our Saviour is called the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World.

And it is very probable, that it was by *Abel's* Faith in this Saviour to come, that he offered a more acceptable Sacrifice than *Cain*, who would not submit to the Institution, but would rather come to God by a Sacrifice of his own choosing, such as his own Reason directed, like our modern Deists, than that which had been appointed by God ; depending rather upon the Acceptance of his Offering from the natural Goodness and Intention of it, than from the Death of the promised Saviour.

This, I say, is probable ; and it is no Objection to this, that St. Paul speaking of this Faith of *Abel* seems to make it to consist only in a Belief in God, as the Rewarder of those that diligently seek him ; for he might nevertheless expect his Reward thro' the Death of the Saviour promised, and his Faith in his Death he might have expressed in the Sacrifice Time he offered.

And if this was so, here was the same Means provided to give the World a Title to the Sacrifice of Christ before his coming, as since ; namely, by Faith in his Death declared by a visible Sign and outward Memorial of it.

But if we consider the Death of Christ, not barely as a Sacrifice, but as the finishing Act of that Obedience, which was required of Him by God, as a Means of our Reconciliation to Him, and as a Condition which he would accept, as a Price paid for it: If we consider it, I say, in this Light, then since this Price was paid for the whole World, the whole World are intitled to such Benefits purchased by it, as they are capable of, even tho' they know nothing of it.

What these Benefits are we cannot pretend to say ; but the Scripture says, that the times of Heathen Ignorance God winked at, that is, He had Compassion on their Sins, and this might for ought we know be the Effect of our Saviour's Redemption ; thro' whom God might pass over their Transgressions as the Iniquities of Children that knew no better.

And as our Saviour likewise says, that in Heaven in his Father's House, there are many Mansions, so He may have provided a proper Place for such as know him not, who live up to the Light they have.

But this is what we know nothing of : When we speak of these things, we can but guess, and it is enough if our Guesses are but

probable, nay but bare possible in things of this Nature.

But after all that can be said, this is what we have nothing to do with. How God will deal with the dark Heathen World, we are not told, and we may be saved without knowing that. It is sufficient that we know what concerns our selves ; this is plainly taught us, and we must be content with what is revealed : Secret things belong to God, and it is a bold Curiosity in us to search into them ; but much more to object against the Providence of God for what we are not judges of, and what our shallow Capacities cannot reach. And this is all that I shall say to this Question.

The next thing to be inquired into is, how it comes to pass, that since all who are redeemed by Christ, have Forgiveness of their Sins ; they who are guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, have no Share in this Redemption, and why their Sin shall never be forgiven.

Of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and why unpardonable.

THIS is the Difficulty : But from what has been before said, the Solution is easy : For since it appears, that according to the Gospel all People have Redemption thro' the Blood of Christ, and are restored to the Favour of God, who will accept the Offer by Faith in Christ, and fit themselves for it by Repentance ;

tance ; from hence it will follow, that if the Sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, it must be such a Sin as rejects the Offer of Redemption by Christ, and refuses to accept it at his Hands, and that in such a manner as cannot be repented of : What this unpardonable Sin consists in, there are various Opinions amongst Divines. The most commonly received Opinion is, that it consists in ascribing our Saviour's Miracles to the Devil ; but this I humbly conceive was not the Sin, but only the Occasion of what our Saviour said concerning it.

In the account of this Matter given us by St. Matthew, *Chap. xii. 22, &c.* we are told, that our Saviour having cured a Person possessed with a Devil, the People being amazed, began to conclude that he was their Messiah, *the Son of David.*

Upon this the Pharisees object against him, that what he did was done by the Power of the Devil : This our Saviour proves to be a malicious Calumny, and from thence took Occasion to let them know the Consequence, if they should do by the Holy Ghost, as they had done by him.

Wherfore I say unto you, v. 31. that is, because you accused me of dealing with the Devil, therefore I say unto you, All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men: But the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto Men.

And whosoever speaketh a Word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, &c.

Now by the Son of Man is meant our Saviour himself; and by Blasphemy is meant speaking against him falsely and calumniously. And in this he refers not only to the many false and reproachful Speeches, that had been at several times urged against Him; but also to that particular Calumny, which was the immediate Occasion of these Words, namely, his dealing with the Devil. Now these Calumnies, he says, are capable of Forgiveness, (that is so far as they are repented of, for without that, no Sin will be forgiven,) but the Sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, and that as I shall show by and by, because it cannot be repented of.

This Sin is here called Blasphemy or Calumny, and speaking against the Holy Ghost; and by this speaking against the Holy Ghost, must naturally be meant their speaking against the Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost, as they had spoken against the Works done by our Saviour, imputing them to the Operation of the Devil.

And of this Sin against the Holy Ghost, he says, that whosoever shall *bereafter* be guilty of it, he shall not be forgiven; for the Word in the Greek (*ο δ' αν βλασφημήσῃ v. 24.*) denotes the to come.

And

And tho' this imputing our Saviour's Works to the Devil was the Occasion of his saying, that he did them by the *Spirit of God*, yet it is very probable, that by this Expression was understood no more, but that he did them by the *Power of God*.

And by imputing them to the Devil, they could not be said to speak against the Holy Ghost, because as yet they did *not know there was any Holy Ghost*: It does not appear, that they had any Notion of any such distinct divine Person; or if they had, if this speaking against Him, had been the unpardonable Sin, none that had been guilty of it could be capable of Pardon; whereas we read of many converted after this, and admitted to the Covenant of Grace by Baptism, who probably had been guilty of it; as they had been guilty of crucifying our Saviour, as a Deceiver or Impostor, and by Consequence must probably have believed, and fallen in with the popular Calumny of imputing his Miracles to the Devil. *Acts ii. 22, 23.* And,

To this we may add, that it is very unreasonable to think, that our Saviour should make it a standing fundamental Article of his Religion, that they who shall accept Salvation thro' Him, shall have Forgiveness of their Sins upon their Repentance; and yet should denounce an irreversible Condemnation on this Sin of imputing his Works to the Devil, (if this had been the Sin he aimed at) when it is plain there were many Evidences then to come, by which

they might be convinced of their Sin, and brought to Repentance for it.

Our Saviour's Death, and the Wonders that attended it ; his Resurrection, Ascension, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost were Evidences yet unknown to the World : And it is to this last Evidence of our Saviour's Mission and Authority, that He most probably refers in these Words : And therefore when he says, that whosoever shall hereafter resist this last Evidence of his Mission, and blaspheme the Gifts and miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghost, as the Pharisees have blasphemed my Works, shall never be forgiven, the Reason is very obvious and intelligible, because this is the last Testimony that was to be given to Christianity, and there is nothing further left to bring them to Repentance.

This I take to be the Meaning of our Saviour's Words, which must be understood, as if he had spoken to the Pharisees to this Effect.

You see the wondrous Works I have done in my Father's Name, as the Son of God, which are sufficient to convince you that I am sent by God, but you will not believe in me. You conceive me to be only the Son of Man, and an Impostor, acting by the Power of the Devil : This is an unreasonable Calumny, because the Devil cannot be supposed to cast out Devils, by which he must destroy his own Kingdom ; but yet how unreasonable soever this is, this is possible to be forgiven, because it may be repented of. And there are several Evidences yet

yet remaining to be offered to you, by which you may be convinced of your Sin.

He who will not be persuaded by my present Works, shall see greater Works than these. As a Proof of my Sincerity, he shall see me lay down my Life in Confirmation of my coming from God ; and when I am dead, he shall further see the Testimony of God in my Behalf, when *the Veil of the Temple shall be torn to pieces, the Earth shall quake, and the Rocks be rent, and the Graves be opened, and the Dead raised.* And after all this, I will rise from the Dead, and ascend into Heaven, and send the Gift of the Holy Ghost on my Disciples, to enable them to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and confirm it by such a Course of Miracles, as will be sufficient to convince the World of Sin, if they don't believe in me : And if you shall hereafter do by these Gifts and the Miracles wrought thro' the Power of the Holy Ghost, as you have done already by the Miracles you have seen me do, and impute them to the Devil, as you have done mine, there is no Remedy remaining for you, but you must die in your Sins, and the Wrath of God abide upon you. This I think to be a natural Paraphrase of our Saviour's Words : And if so,

The Sin against the Holy Ghost not possible till after our Saviour's Time.

FROM what has been said it appears, that by the Sin against the Holy Ghost must be meant an obstinate Rejection of Christ, in Opposition to and in Contempt of the Evidence given to him by the Gifts and Powers imparted to the Apostles by the Holy Ghost. And if this be the Meaning of it, I cannot see why this Sin should be confined only to our Saviour's Time: It is rather plain, that it could not be committed in his Time, nor at any time, till after the Descent of the Holy Ghost. And I don't see why it may not as well be committed in our Days, who have the several Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost revealed to us, if we reject them as Impostures, as if we had lived in the Apostle's Time: And therefore they who shall apostatise from Christianity after they have received the Knowledge of the Truth, rejecting the *Blood of Christ* as a Sacrifice for Sin, and counting it *as an unholy Thing*, that is, esteeming it either as the Blood of a Malefactor and Deceiver, or at least a common Man; and shall *do despite to the Spirit of Grace*, that is, shall contemn the Holy Ghost, which confirmed his Authority, and account all his Gifts and Operations as Delusions; what is this but sinning against the Holy Ghost; and what is there left to bring such Men to Repentance, without which they cannot be forgiven? St. Paul says, it is impossible

possible to renew such Men to Repentance, *Heb.* vi. 4, 5, 6. — x. 26. and as impossible for them to escape God's Vengeance.

For how shall we escape, says he, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was afterwards confirmed by those that heard him, God also bearing them Witness by Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost? *Heb.* ii. 3. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost were the last Evidence; and if all these together will not convince, what other Evidence can we hope for? If we will not accept of Pardon and Salvation in the Gospel way; how shall we escape the Vengeance of God?

And if Men were capable of this unpardonable Sin of resisting the Evidence given to Christianity by the Holy Ghost in the Apostle's Time, as he plainly intimates they might by his Endeavours to dissuade them from it, why may not we be guilty of it in our Days, as well as they?

There is no Difference between them and us in this Respect, but that we do not see the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, as they did: But if we have sufficient Evidence that there were such Gifts, and yet will be Infidels in spite of them, our Infidelity is as wilful as theirs was; and we have as little hope of Pardon, as they had.

And this should be a Warning to all Christians to take heed, lest there be in any of them an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the living God:

"Tis

'Tis now become fashionable to be Infidels, and too many, I doubt, make Infidelity their Study, and seek out for Arguments to persuade themselves into it: But they don't consider what they are doing : As we are all Sinners, one would think, that we should be all glad to receive the joyful Tidings of Salvation : And as we are naturally too easy in believing, what we desire and wish for, one would expect, that Sinners should be willing to fall in with any Dispensation of Pardon and Mercy, that is but probable, or even barely possible.

And therefore when we see Men endeavouring to throw off Christianity, that gives them the strongest Assurance of Mercy upon the strongest Evidence possible of a divine Authority, what can be the Reason of this Conduct, but Spite and Perverseness? And if this has but any, the least, Resemblance to the Sin against the Holy Ghost, nothing should be more terrible to a thinking Man, that believes in God, and a future Judgment, and is sensible of his Need of Mercy. If the Sin against the Testimony of the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, a prudent Man would be afraid of every Thing, that is but like it, lest he come even within the Borders of a certain Damnation.

Thus have I finished what I have to say, which is, I think, all that is material to be said on this Subject.

What I have said is, as I conceive, intirely agreeable to Scripture, and I hope may be useful to the right Knowledge of Christianity.

It

It sets before us a clear, easy, consistent, rational Scheme of our Redemption, highly conducing to the Honour of God, and the Reformation of the World.

And that the Reader may see it in one View, the Substance of the whole May be comprised in the few following Words, namely,

A Recapitalation of what has been said.

THAT God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, foreseeing from all Eternity how Mankind would act after their Creation, what Miseries they would bring themselves into by Sin, and what Remedy they would stand in need of, to preserve them from Ruin, decreed before the Foundation of the World, out of mere Love and Goodness to His Creatures, to provide this Remedy for them, and to offer it to them, so soon as it should be proper to apply it, and Mankind be in a proper Disposition to receive it.

The Remedy provided by God the Father was to be offered to the World by Jesus Christ, whom the Scripture represents to have had a Being *with God*, and in *Glory with Him before the World was*, and that God the Father entered into Covenant with Him for the Execution of this great Design in Time to come : And for this Purpose appointed, that he should descend from Heaven, and leave His Glory there to come down upon the Earth to act as a Mediator between Him, and Sinners.

As a Mediator on God's Part, He was to offer Peace and Reconciliation, on the Condition of their Repentance, and Reformation, to all, that would accept the Offer at his Hands, as the Messenger, and Minister of God. And in order to this Reconciliation He was to teach them how God required them to live, with proper Motives to ingage them to it. And that He might do this in a Way most likely to work upon them, He was to take Human Nature, that being a Man like themselves, He might instruct them, not only by His Doctrine, but Example.

But though He was to appear in Human Nature, yet as He was to act in the Name, and by the Authority of God, which required a Person of suitable Dignity, and Perfections, so God appointed, that His taking Human Nature upon Him, should be in such a Way, as that He should be at the same Time the Son of God :

And as there would be a Necessity for the Discharge of the Work, He was to be sent upon, that He should be indued with extraordinary Gifts, and Powers, not only to guide Him into all Truth, that He might be perfectly qualified to make known the perfect Will of God, but to convince the World of His Mission, and Authority, that He was the Son of God ; so it pleased the Father, that in Him should all the Fullness of the Godhead dwell, that, as He was to act in the Name and Behalf of God, whatever He should teach, com-

mand, or promise might be received, and acquiesced in, as the Word and Will of God.

This is the Substance of our Saviour's Mediation on God's Part : And as this was what our Saviour undertook, so the Scripture tells us that the Father personally united Himself to Him, and became one with Him, and dwelt in Him in such a Manner, that whatever He spake in the Name of God, God (the Father) spake by Him, and the Works that He did in God's Name, God (the Father) did by Him.

But as our Saviour was to act for God with Sinners, so there was something required of Him, as a Mediator for Sinners with God : And that which He was to do on their Behalf was to offer Himself, as a Sacrifice of Atonement for them.

All Sin is a Dishonour to God, as the Governor of the World ; it reflects on His Laws, as unwise, or unpracticable ; and if wilful, and presumptuous, 'tis an Act of Rebellion : And therefore though God decreed to pardon Sinners, yet he required it to be done in such a Way, as that the Sinners should make Him Satisfaction for the Injury they had done Him by the Dishonour they had brought upon his Laws, and Government by their Wickedness.

The Satisfaction He required was a publick Sacrifice in which all Sinners were to join, as a publick Confession of their Guilt, and a publick Act of their Humiliation and Repentance for it : And the Sacrifice appointed for this Purpose was the Blood of Christ.

God foreknew how the Jews would deal with Him, what Indignities they would treat Him with, and what a shameful and miserable Death they would put Him to, and upon our Saviour's voluntary Submission to this Death, God promised to accept it, as a Sacrifice of Atonement for all Sinners, that would join in it, by accepting His Mediation for them, and assenting to what He should do in their Name.

This seems to be the Scripture Scheme of Providence for the Redemption of Mankind, and the Substance of the Covenant relating to it, between God and our Saviour before the Creation of the World :

This was the Design laid by the Father, and proposed to our Saviour, as the Work, which God required of Him, under Promise of being reconciled to the sinful World : This Reconciliation promised was probably the Joy that was set before Him : And in Consequence of this Covenant, and in Prospect of this Joy, as He came down from Heaven to take our Nature, and be born of a Woman, when the Time appointed for it was accomplished ; called in Scripture the Fulness of Time : And as in this Nature He fulfilled the Work, and underwent the Death, which *the Council of God had determined for Him*, Acts iv. 28. cheerfully enduring the Cross, and despising the Shame, in Comparison of the Motive He had in View ; so we are hereby said to be Redeemed by Him, as he has performed what God required of Him, as the Price to be paid for it.

But

But then it is to be considered, that since the Blood of Christ is a Propitiation only, for those that believe in Him, and accept His Mediation for them, and Assent to what he has suffered, as a Sacrifice in their Name; 'tis necessary that every one, who would be intitled to Redemption by His Blood, as their Sacrifice, should some way or other declare, and acknowledge this their Faith in Him; and join in his Sacrifice by their Assent to it.

And since all Mankind are Sinners, and since the Declaration, and Acknowledgment to be made by all Sinners does necessarily require that it be done in Publick, as a publick Act of the Sinner's Humiliation, and Repentance, and as a publick Satisfaction made to God for the Dis-honour they have done Him by their wicked Works :

And since it is self-evident, that such publick Acts cannot be done in such a Manner, as we can be sure will be acceptable to God, unless appointed by God Himself; so we have three Institutions appointed for this Purpose, namely,

First, that all who accept Jesus Christ for their Redeemer, and assent to his Death, as a Sacrifice in their Name, shall declare it by Baptism, as an Emblematick Sign of his Death and Burial and Resurrection, and of our Death unto Sin, and our rising again to Righteousness.

2dly, That they often meet together in Remembrance of His Death, as a publick own-

ing of His Sacrifice for them, and in full Trust in God's Mercy for the Sake of it upon their Reformation.

Lastly, That they all come unto God thro' Christ, as their Mediator and Sacrifice in all their Addresses to God and all the Services they pay Him, hoping for Acceptance only thro' His (our Saviour's) Death : And since they only are capable of Redemption by the Death of Christ who accept His Mediation for them, and assent to what he has done in their Name ; and since it is by these Institutions, that we are required to make Declaration of this Acceptance, and Assent, it follows, that 'tis by these Institutions only, that we are capable of partaking of the Benefits of our Saviour's Redemption.

But still we must remember that these Benefits are not annexed to the bare Acts of these Institutions themselves, but only as they are done, as outward Signs of those inward Dispositions intended to be expressed and declared by them.

And therefore though it be necessary in order to our Redemption by Christ, that we religiously observe these appointed Ordinances, yet it is equally necessary, that we do it in a proper Manner, without which they will signify nothing, but will all be fruitless and in vain.

This is a short Abstract of what I have said, in which the Reader has a general View of the Covenant of our Redemption between God, and our Saviour, before the Creation of the World ; and I think there is nothing in all this

but what is intelligible, and not above the Capacity of any common Christian.

But there is another Part of the Covenant between God and our Saviour, which the Scripture speaks of, and which I have not taken any Notice of : And this relates chiefly to our Saviour himself, and seems to be offered to Him, as a Motive of Reward for the Work He was to undertake in order to our Redemption ; and it is this, namely, That, whereas He was to take our Nature, and suffer Death, He should not continue in that State, but be raised again the third Day, and be taken into Heaven in His Human Body, where He should be set *at the Right Hand of God in the Fulness of Joy and Power ; crowned with Glory and Honour, having all Things both in Heaven and Earth made subject to him.*

This glorious State our Saviour is already possessed of, and in this State He is to reign till the Consummation of all Things.

The Scripture tells us, that there is a Time when the Frame of this World shall be destroyed, *when the Heavens shall be dissolved with Fire, and the Elements melt with fervent Heat,* and then all Mankind both dead and living shall be summoned before our Saviour, as their Judge, to give up their Accouns before His Tribunal, and receive according to their Deeds : And when our Saviour has finished this Work, which God the Father ordained and appointed for Him, because He is the Son of Man, He is then to resign His Kingdom to the Father, that *God may be all in all.* 1 Cor. xv. 28. Whe-

Whether before this Resignation of His Kingdom, there is not to be a Renovation of all Things after the Dissolution spoken of, and whether there will not be new Heavens, and a new Earth created, wherein *the Righteous* are to dwell and inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the Beginning of the World; And whether Jesus Christ is not to reign over this Kingdom of the Righteous a 1000 Years, has been variously disputed by learned Men. It is certain, that we are directed by our Saviour to pray, that the Kingdom of God may come, in which His Will shall be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven: And if this be the Kingdom of the Messias, if we are not required to pray in vain, for what cannot be, and was not intended to be, it seems not unreasonable to believe, that there will be such a Kingdom, as this on Earth, in which our Saviour shall reign over the Righteous His Elect, and chosen ones: Here is nothing forced, nothing hard to be conceived in this; but whether it will be so, or not, or how long this Kingdom is to continue, we cannot tell: It is enough for us, that the Righteous shall be infinitely happy: This is what all agree in: My Design is not to fill Men's Heads with Conjectures, and uncertain Speculations, but to set before them a right Notion of what is revealed, and has been too often misrepresented.

And as I have said all, that I think necessary for this Purpose, I shall not trespass on the Reader's Patience any longer.

APPENDIX.

A Prayer of *Simplicius a Heathen Philosopher.*

IΚετεύωσε, Δέσπολα,
δ πατήρ καὶ ἡγεμῶν
ΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΗΜΙΝ ΛΟΓΟΥ, ὑπομυησθῆναι
μὲν ἡμᾶς τῆς ἔαυτῶν
ἐγγένειας ἥς ἡξιώθη-
μεν πάρα σε συμπερά-
ξαι δὲ ὡς αὐτοκινήτοις
ἡμῖν πρὸς τε οὐάθαρσιν
τὴν ἀπὸ τῷ σώματος καὶ
τῶν ἀλύγων παθῶν, καὶ
πρὸς τὸ ὑπερέχειν καὶ ἅρ-
χειν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὡς ὁρ-
γάνοις κεχρῆσθαι οὐτὰ
τὸν προσήκοντα τρόπον
Καὶ πρὸς διόρθωσιν ἀ-
κριβῆ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγου,
καὶ ἔνωσιν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὰ
ὄντας ὄντα διὰ τῷ τῆς
ἀλε-

IBeseech thee, O Lord,
the Father and Guide
of our Soul within us, to
make us mindful of that
Generous Nature thou hast
indued us with; and to
assist us, as free Agents, to
cleanse ourselves from all
bodily and unreasonable
Passions, to subdue, and
govern them, and use them
only as Instruments in a
proper Manner: And that
we may be able perfectly to
correct that reasonable Prin-
ciple within us through the
Light of Truth, and unite
it to those Things that have
a real Existence. And
Thirdly, I beseech my Sa-
viour, that he will per-
fectly remove that Mist
from the Eyes of our Un-
derstandings

ἀλεθείας Φωτός. Καὶ *standings*, that we may,
 τὸ τρίτον, τὸν σωτῆρα (as Homer says) have a
 ἴκετεύω, ἀφελεῖν τελέ-
 ως τὴν ἀχλὺν τῶν ψυ-
 χικῶν ἡμῶν ὁμοάτων,
 "Οφρὰ γινώσκομεν εὖ
 (κατὰ τὸν "Ομηρον) ἡ
 μὲν Θεὸν, ἥδε καὶ ἄνδρα.

N. B. The Use I would make of this Prayer
 of Simplicius, is to shew the Reader, that the
 Word *λόγος* was used for the Human Soul,
 and therefore might be so used by St. John
 in His Gospel.

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